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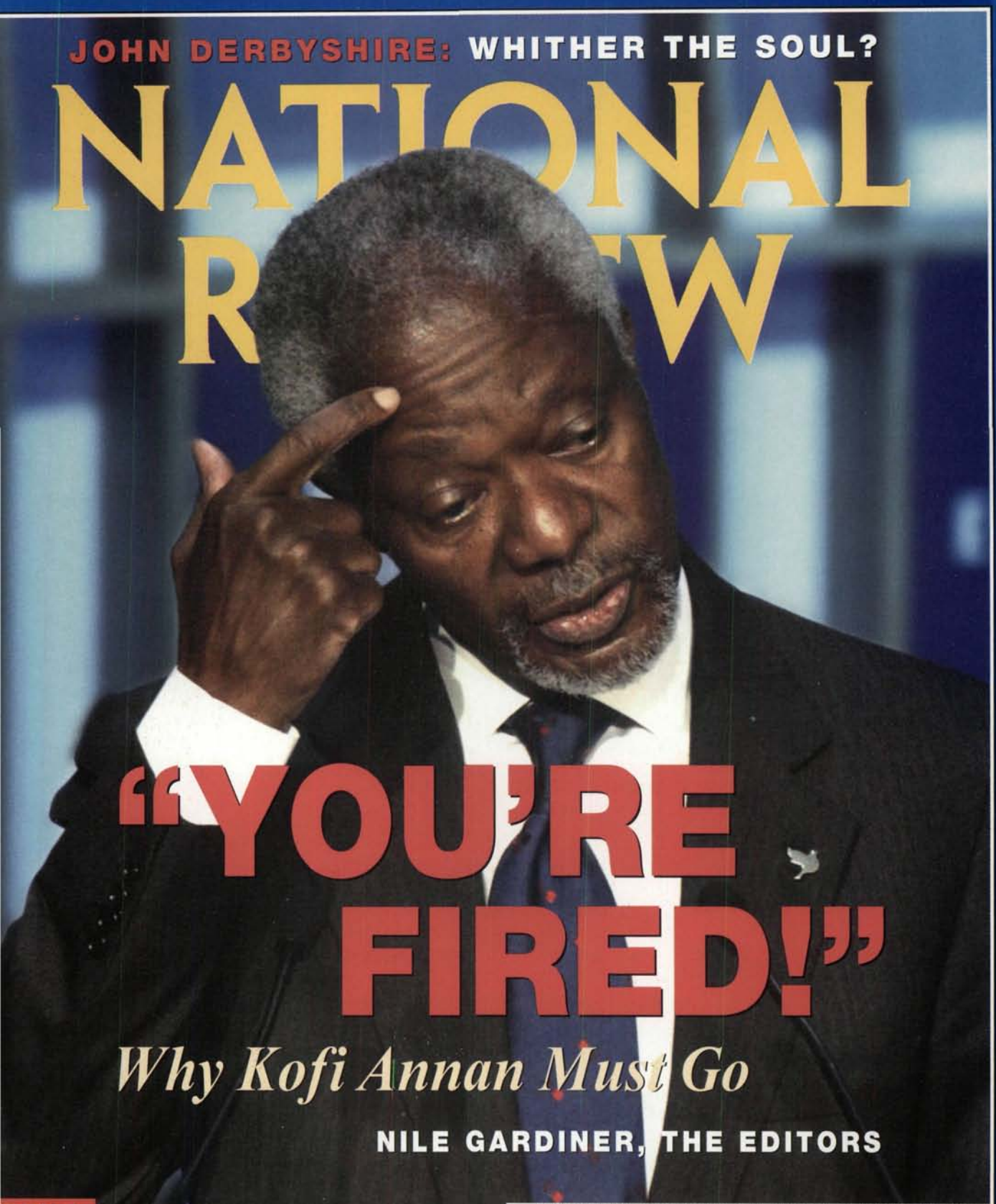

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DECEMBER 13, 2004 VOL. LVI, NO. 23

NATIONAL REVIEW

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■ COVER STORY

Kofi's Hour Is Up

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This has been a wretched year for Kofi Annan. The U.N. secretary general has looked a forlorn figure on the world stage: He has appeared weak and clueless in confronting terrorism, WMD proliferation, and genocide. At the same time, the massive scandal over the U.N.'s administration of the Iraq Oil for Food program has brought the world body's reputation to an all-time low. *By Nile Gardiner*

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letters to the editor

ARGUING GAY MARRIAGE

For better or worse, social conservatives have provided a coherent rationale for limiting marriage to the union of one man and one woman. This limitation, we are told, is designed to maintain traditional family arrangements and create an ideal environment for child-rearing.

Midge Decter must have missed that memo. She argues ("An Amazing Pass," Nov. 8) that lesbian marriage is no big deal. "They are women," Decter writes, "and women are by nature monogamous, wishing to be mothers, for instance, and to bring up their children in stable households."

"The real issue here is with, and about, the men," she continues. "For men are not by nature monogamous—it is women who make them so." She concedes that "there have also been homosexual [male] couples who have famously lived together for years and years, sometimes indeed for life, but what heterosexuals would define as marital loyalty has little or nothing to do with it."

This argument is circular. One cannot expect the most committed and faithful gay couples to practice marital loyalty while denying them the freedom to marry.

If Decter can live with monogamous lesbian marriages, she can have no principled objection to equally faithful gay-male marriages. Conversely, according to Decter's thinking, promiscuous lesbians should be forbidden to wed, or their marriage licenses should lapse if either female can prove that the other cheated.

Indeed, Decter's logic suggests that marriage-license laws should be amended to require and enforce monogamy, perhaps through biennial affidavits filed with local marriage bureaus. Those committed to monogamy could marry and stay wed. Those who cheat would have their licenses revoked. Those who lie under oath, even about sex, would face perjury charges.

If the marriage debate is about fidelity, and not really about the children, social conservatives should permit and, indeed, encourage faithful matrimony among gay Americans.

Deroy Murdock
New York, N.Y.

MIDGE DECTER REPLIES: Dear, dear, Mr. Murdock—laws are simple, and should be, but social reality is often, indeed usually, complex. Does one really have to point out that understanding a phenomenon is not the same as advocating it? In any case, the point was that gay marriage, so far from being a matter of either justice or compassion, is merely a further greasing of the slippery slope we have been on for some years now. First came the demand for a cure for AIDS that would help to perpetuate blind promiscuity. Then for marriage. And next, mark you, for the legitimation of pederasty (something, along with bathhouse frolics, in which women by their nature don't happen to be involved, that's all).

BREAKDOWN

During the 1960s, as a classroom teacher in the Los Angeles unified school district, I saw firsthand how the student-rights movement eroded the authority of public-school faculty and set the stage for the chaos taking place on too many campuses today ("Sparing Rods, Spoiling Children," by Richard Arum, Oct. 11). Lawsuits filed against schools for disciplining students, as far back as 1964, had an unimaginably emasculating effect. By 1974, the doctrine of *in loco parentis* was quaint, as education law grew into a lucrative specialty. As Arum ably demonstrates, the effects of this unfortunate revolution are still being felt.

Walt Gardner
Los Angeles, Calif.

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for the record

"All these free gifts you're always pumping into the economy—are you a Keynesian or something?"

■ Rasmussen poll: President **Bush** earns job-approval rating of 54 percent. . . . Bush on Iraqi elections: "As those elections draw near, the desperation of the killers will grow, and the violence could escalate. The success of democracy in Iraq would be a crushing blow to the forces of terror, and the terrorists know it. The defeat of terror in Iraq will set that nation on a course to lasting freedom, and will give hope to millions, and the Iraqi people know it. And a free, democratic Iraq will inspire reformers throughout the Middle East and make America more secure." . . . Bush '04 campaign manager **Ken Mehlman** succeeds **Ed Gillespie** as chairman of Republican National Committee. . . . Sen. **Elizabeth Dole** (R., N.C.) defeats Sen. **Norm Coleman** (R., Minn.) in election to head National Republican Senatorial Committee. . . . Zogby poll: 87 percent think presidential vote was counted accurately. . . . *Congress approves raising federal debt* limit to $8.18 trillion, up $2.23 trillion since Bush took office.

■ Sen. **John Kerry** (D., Mass.) on running again: "It is so premature to be thinking about something so far down the road. What I've said is I'm not opening any doors, I'm not shutting any doors. . . . If there's a next time, we'll do a better job." . . . Former Kerry pollster **Mark Mellman**, in *USA Today*: "It would be sort of crazy for somebody in his position not to consider 2008." . . . Many Democrats wonder why Kerry has at least $15 million left unspent in his campaign account. . . . Sen. **Frank Lautenberg** (D., N.J.), to AP: "Saying goodbye to **Tom Daschle** is a very sentimental thing for all of us." . . . Sen. **Joe Lieberman** (D., Conn.), on Fox News: "Democrats became to many voters in the country the anti-war party and, of course, the culturally, morally permissive party. And that's not where a majority of the American people are, and that's why they voted the way they did in this election." . . . Justice **Antonin Scalia** on 2000 White House ruling, at University of Michigan: "I'm inclined to say it's been four years and an election. Get over it."

■ Gov. **Arnold Schwarzenegger** (R., Calif.), on CNN: "I am very conservative when it comes to fiscal policies. . . . The exception is if you have an idea, infrastructure or, for instance, transportation or our ports or something like that, or certain infrastructure of the hospitals, and so you can then go to the people and say, 'Do you want to have a tax increase?' And you let the people make the decision and we can provide this and that kind of additional thing." . . . In Washington state, **Dino Rossi** (R.) wins race for governor by 261 votes, but state law requires recount. . . . Sen. **Chuck Schumer** (D., N.Y.) says he won't run for governor in 2006, clearing path to Democratic nomination for attorney general **Eliot Spitzer**. . . . Gov. **George Pataki** (R., N.Y.) won't say whether he plans to seek fourth term. . . . *Conservative party chairman* **Mike Long** says his party may withhold endorsement from Pataki.

■ Sen. **Hillary Clinton** (D., N.Y.) on running for president, on Fox News: "I'm not thinking about that. I'm thinking about running for reelection" in 2006. . . . Hillary on whether she'll serve full six-year term as senator, on CNN: "I haven't gotten that far." . . . Hillary on Electoral College: "I'm inclined to think it may have outlived its usefulness at this point." . . . Rep. **Vito Fossella** (R., N.Y.) says **Colin Powell** should challenge Sen. Clinton. . . . **Rudy Giuliani** refuses to rule out Senate bid. . . . Retiring Sen. **Ernest Hollings** (D., S.C.) on female senators, in *Columbia State*: "Now we've got 15 or 17, and you can't shut 'em up." . . . Sen. **Ben Nelson** (D., Neb.) on running for president, in *Omaha World-Herald*: "I wouldn't take it off the table." . . . Poll shows Gov. **Mike Johanns** (R.) running just behind Nelson for 2006 Senate race: 41 percent to 38 percent. . . . National Endowment for the Humanities Award recipients include **Gertrude Himmelfarb**, **Hilton Kramer**, **Harvey Mansfield**, and **Shelby Steele**.

■ Zogby poll: 65 percent rank **Ronald Reagan** "great" or "near great" president, compared with 41 percent for George W. Bush, 44 percent for **Bill Clinton**, 33 percent for **George H. W. Bush**, and 32 percent for **Jimmy Carter**. . . . Clinton's presidential library opens in Little Rock, Ark., and displays mention **Monica Lewinsky**. . . . Clinton: "America has two great dominant strands of political thought . . . conservatism, which, at its very best, draws lines that should not be crossed; and progressivism, which, at its very best, breaks down barriers that are no longer needed or should never have been erected in the first place." . . . Clinton, on ABC: "[There's] not any example of where I ever disgraced this country publicly." . . . Rep. Tom Tancredo (R., Colo.) proposes ban on Congress's naming things after sitting members of House and Senate. . . . Number of convicts with death sentences drops to lowest level in 30 years, *according to Bureau of Justice Statistics.*

■ Iraqi government of **Saddam Hussein** stole more than $21 billion from U.N.'s Oil for Food program, according to Senate report. . . . French consider naming streets in several cities after **Yasser Arafat**. . . . Chile legalizes divorce. . . . Britain outlaws fox hunting in England and Wales.

■ **David Letterman**: "You know who may run for the Democrats in 2008? Hillary Clinton. Her husband is so excited that he is already interviewing White House interns." **NR**

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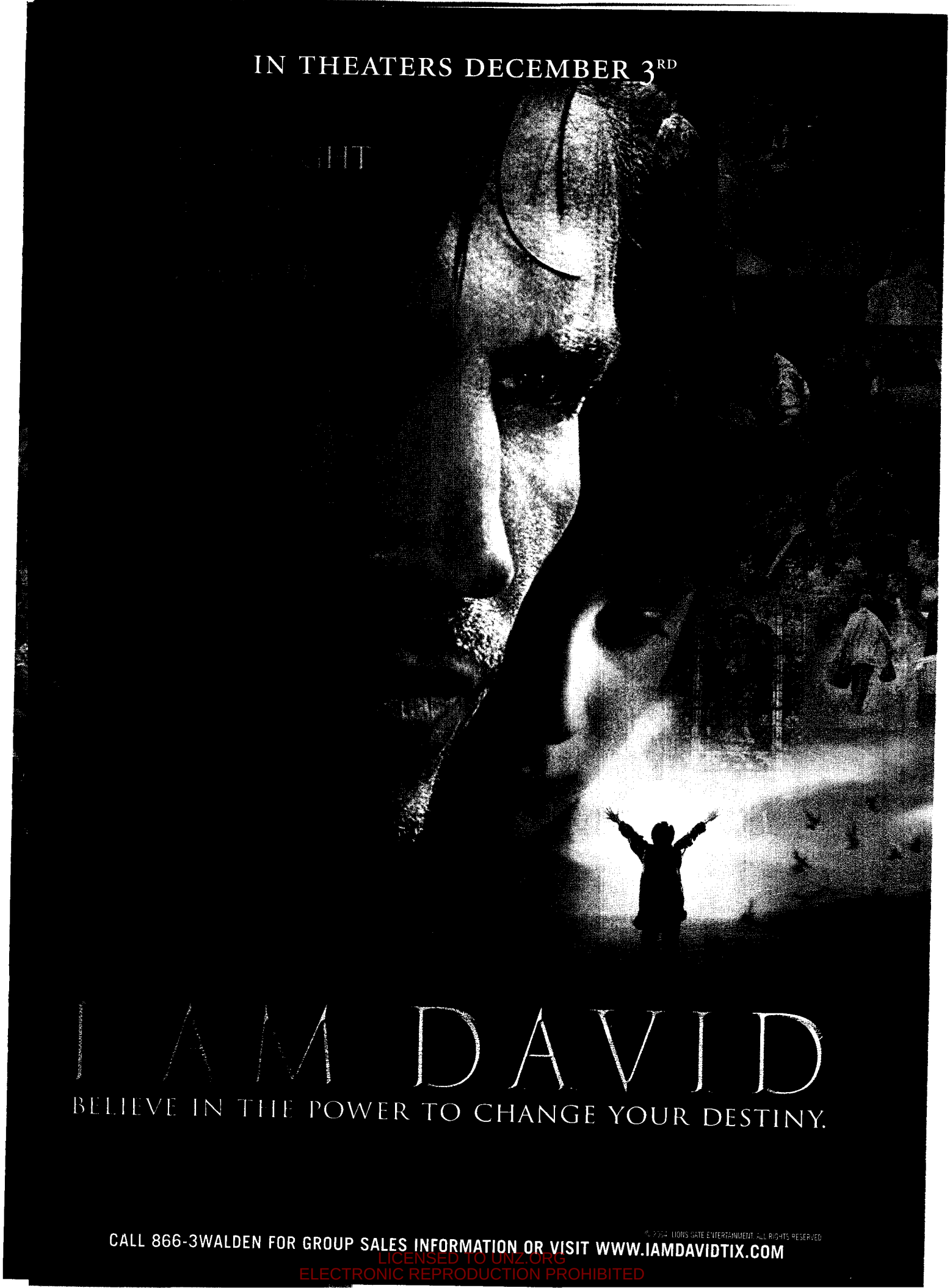
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THE WEEK

■ Some left-wingers vowed to go to Canada following Bush's reelection. We're waiting . . .

■ Condoleezza Rice is a solid foreign-policy thinker who ought to make a fine secretary of state. She is an admirable combination of what might be called realism and idealism (though the terms are too crude): The Reagan experience, as she said in a 1999 interview with NR, modified the straight balance-of-power Kissingerianism she had previously espoused. In a 2002 interview with us, she spoke of "power" and "values," "inseparable" to her. Among her duties as secretary of state will be that of managing the department—which has not exactly been a friend to President Bush and his policies. When Rice was national security adviser, her managerial skills were called into question; they will have to be sharp as tacks for State. The man she replaces, Colin Powell, is one of the most popular men in America, and for some good reasons. But he did a weak job of explaining and defending U.S. policies around the globe, and he spent too much time signaling to the press his disapproval of some of those policies. Rice will be on the same wavelength as the president. It is almost an afterthought that she is a black woman. Rest assured that, if the president and new SecState were liberal Democrats, the press would be making a big deal out of color and sex. Bush seems incapable of appointing secretaries of state who are not black. But he doesn't think of it that way, and neither should anybody else. From Condi Rice, we hope to see competence, strength, and perhaps a little flair, in a critical time for the world.

■ Bill Clinton opened his presidential library, which features scandalously self-regarding exhibits, including one whitewashing the Monica affair. Should we be surprised? Democrats are feeling nostalgic for Bubba's political magic, as well they might. His willingness to forthrightly address his party's weaknesses—on crime, welfare, taxes, and national security—made it possible for the Democrats to win the White House again in 1992. But, once in office, he danced through the political raindrops to deliver moderately conservative governance at home—especially on the economy—while he watched his party erode beneath him, indulged in (and lied under oath about) gross liaisons with an intern, and failed to take seriously enough the foremost threat of our time, Islamist terrorism. Those nostalgic Dems can be forgiven for preferring the stilted version of his two terms on display in Little Rock.

■ The custom of seniority put Arlen Specter in line to be chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee. But after Specter suggested that Bush would be well advised not to nominate judges opposed to *Roe* v. *Wade*, conservatives objected—and Specter was able to win his post only by assuring his Republican colleagues that he would not apply a pro-*Roe* litmus test. We wish

WJC at his library opening: What could rain on his parade?

the Republicans had chosen a chairman committed to a properly restrained view of judicial power, not to mention tort reform. But the campaign against Specter was nonetheless useful. Republicans are on notice that having first won and then expanded their Senate majority in part by promising to confirm constitutionalist judges, they are now expected to deliver. An early sign of seriousness will be a change in the committee ratios to reflect the new balance of power between Republicans and Democrats; another will be a commitment to break liberal filibusters. Get to it, gentlemen.

■ Republicans changed the rules in the House, permitting indicted lawmakers to serve as their leaders. The move was designed to protect majority leader Tom DeLay, who is being pursued by Democratic prosecutor Ronnie Earle. The Democrat has a history of flimsy political prosecutions: In 1993, he indicted Republican Kay Bailey Hutchison, who was up for reelection the next year, but never got around to presenting a case. House Republicans knew that it would look bad to bend the rules and to allow for indicted leaders. They did not like voting for the change. But they liked even

ROMAN GENN

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The Plight of Immigrants from Mexico

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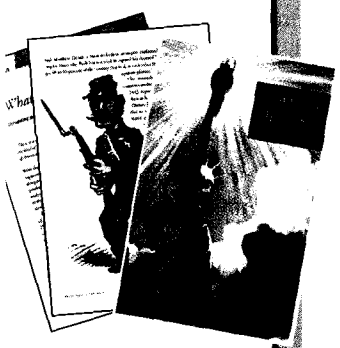

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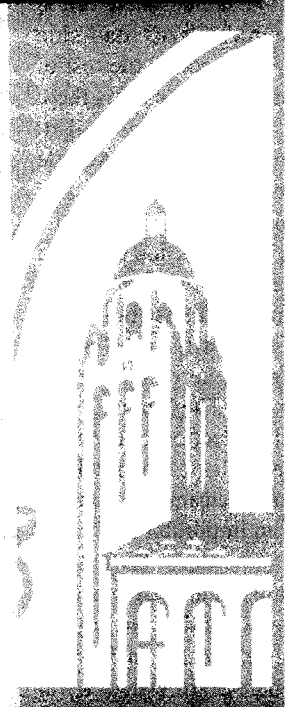

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Immigrants from Mexico do far worse when they migrate to the United States than do immigrants from other countries. Those difficulties are more a reflection of U.S. immigration policy than they are of underlying cultural differences. The following facts from the 2000 U.S. Census reveal that Mexican immigrants do not move into mainstream American society as rapidly as do other immigrants.

1. Eighty percent of non-Mexican immigrants are fluent in English. Among Mexicans, the number is 49 percent.

2. Non-Mexican (working) immigrants have an average wage income of $21,000 a year. Mexican immigrants have an average wage income of $12,000 a year.

3. The typical non-Mexican immigrant has a high school diploma. The typical Mexican immigrant has less than an eighth-grade education.

4. Compared to other Hispanics, only 49 percent of Mexican immigrants are fluent in English, compared to 62 percent of non-Mexican Hispanics.

5. Mexican average incomes are about 75 percent that of other Hispanic immigrants, and Mexican immigrants have about two and a half fewer years of schooling.

Two other facts are worth noting. First, Mexican immigrants live in communities where 15 percent of the residents were also born in Mexico. Non-Mexican immigrants live in communities where fewer than 3 percent of the residents are from their native land. Second, Mexican immigrants account for a much higher proportion of the immigrant population than does any other group—29 percent in the 2000 census.

The last two points are key. **Individuals become assimilated when their incentives to do so are great.** An immigrant from Mexico who moves to East Los Angeles can survive knowing only Spanish and interacting primarily with people from her or his own community. A Bulgarian immigrant to Billings, Montana, must learn English quickly or return to Bulgaria.

A number of studies suggest that the most important factor in explaining English fluency and other aspects of assimilation is the proportion of individuals in one's community who come from his or her native land. When there are many, assimilation is slow; when there are few, assimilation is rapid. **Mexicans often do poorly because they have been part of a large wave of immigrants who have similar cultures, languages, and backgrounds.**

One other factor is that U.S. immigration policy selects immigrants from Mexico primarily on the basis of family connection rather than skill. Immigrants from other countries are more likely to enter and take jobs in highly skilled occupations. In fact, our most able immigrants come from North Africa—Morocco, Algeria, and Libya. Is this because those countries have the world's best educational systems and cultures? No, it is because it is virtually impossible to enter the United States from those countries. The only North Africans to get in are highly educated and talented.

Nothing inherent in Mexicans causes difficulties for them when they come to the United Stated. Instead, it is our immigration policy that encourages the formation of large, insular Mexican communities. Additionally, our policies do not employ the same selection criteria for Mexicans as they do for applicants from other countries.

Moving in the direction of skills-based immigration and away from relative-based immigration is one step we can take to ensure that immigrants do well and become integrated when they come to the United States. Moreover, a conscious policy that encourages a more balanced distribution of countries from which we draw immigrants will improve the speed of assimilation and raise the incomes of both immigrants and U.S. natives.

—Edward P. Lazear

Edward P. Lazear is the Morris Arnold Cox Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution and the Jack Steele Parker Professor of Human Resources, Management and Economics at Stanford University's Graduate School of Business.

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THE WEEK...

less the prospect that Ronnie Earle would choose their leaders for them. The commentators greeted their decision by worrying that Republicans were succumbing to the arrogance of power. Some of these commentators were even sincere well-wishers to the party. Under the circumstances, however, we are inclined to think that the Republicans made the right choice. If Earle presents a serious case against DeLay, his Republican support will evaporate. There will be plenty of time to move against him then. Given Earle's track record, and the charges aired against DeLay so far (see "They Wish They Had a Hammer," May 17), we suspect that this scenario is going to remain safely hypothetical.

■ The House ethics committee, meanwhile, has given us an opportunity to revisit a previous round of attacks on DeLay. Democratic congressman Chris Bell of Texas scored a publicity coup a month before the election, when a complaint he filed led the committee to admonish DeLay. While legislation was pending, DeLay had socialized, as many congressmen do, with interested parties. The committee concluded that he should have avoided the appearance problem—but dismissed Bell's complaint, a fact that went largely unnoticed in the media. The election over, the committee has now further concluded that Bell violated its rules by misstating both facts and law and using inflammatory language designed "to attract publicity and, hence, a political advantage." This is pretty rich. DeLay had noted Bell's violations of the rules months ago. The committee ignored his objections, denied his requests for an evidentiary hearing, and indeed expedited its review of Bell's baseless charges. If Bell abused the ethics committee, it was with that committee's full cooperation—which makes us wonder what exactly ethics have to do with its conduct.

■ The House is losing one of its principal champions of limited government and free markets in Pat Toomey. But supporters of those causes should not lose him. As President Bush assembles his tax-reform commission, he could hardly find a better man to run it than Toomey. He could also be helpful in explaining Social Security reform to his former colleagues, having run on the issue in a senior-heavy district. Bush should use all the smart, dedicated allies he can get.

■ If Karl Rove was the architect of the president's victory, Ken Mehlman was the general contractor who put all the nuts and bolts in place to deliver a historic number of Republicans to the polls. Mehlman will now replace Ed Gillespie, the other indispensable member of the triumphant troika under Bush, as chairman of the Republican National Committee. The Republican party has tapped its top talent to build on this year's wins by boosting GOP margins in 2006. That would be another historic achievement for Mehlman, a tirelessly dedicated strategist who specializes in such achievements.

■ To their credit, House Republicans balked at approving the consolidation of intelligence agencies even after the 9/11 commission recommended it and the White House and Senate backed it. The House Armed Services Committee shares the concerns of military commanders, who fear that the reform would deny the Pentagon control over the satellite intelligence that is crucial to troops in the field. The House Judiciary Committee insists on including provisions, also recommended by the commission, to deny driver's licenses to illegal aliens and to make it easier to deport suspected terrorists. The military's need for real-time intelligence and the obligation to protect our borders are obvious, even if most of Washington is more concerned about the imperative to be seen to be "doing something," and something uncontroversial.

■ Who, besides Kofi Annan, can doubt that Fallujah was a terrorist safe haven? In the last month, U.S. forces have found some 600 Improvised Explosive Devices—i.e., road-side bombs—there, compared with roughly 225 around the rest of the country. They have found 91 major weapons caches there (basically every mosque has one), compared with 130 throughout the rest of the country. In military terms, the battle was a success. The insurgents seemed to expect us to come from the south, but instead the Marines poured in from the north. We probably killed up to 2,000 insurgents and captured another 1,000. Politically, things are hanging together reasonably well. The Iraqi Islamic party has made sounds about quitting the government, but its officials are still there. Sheik Ghazi Yawar, the president of Iraq, from one of the largest Sunni tribes, has stayed in the government. The Sunni Ulema Council has announced it will boycott the elections, but this is no loss—the group represents Sunni radicalism. The retaking of Fallujah may be only one step toward securing the country prior to the January elections, but it is an important one.

■ As the world knows by now, a Marine in Fallujah was captured on tape apparently shooting a wounded insurgent. Naturally, the tape has unleashed a furor and the incident is being investigated. Was this an unfortunate act of war, or a war crime? In our opinion, and pending the outcome of the investigation now underway, it was the former. A soldier who executes a prisoner, either on his own or under orders, has acted in cold blood and consequently has committed a war crime. But it appears to us that the case of this Marine is distinguishable, in that military necessity dictated his action: He did not

THE FRENCH CONNECTION

One doesn't need Miss Marple to
Finger Chirac, who drops a clue
Like circus elephants; so when
He shelters Yasser like a hen,
Then flies the bod to Cairo, it's
Apparent what seemed iffy, fits.
Throw in kickbacks from oil (Saddam's),
And it's no wonder Jacques salaams.

—W. H. VON DREELE

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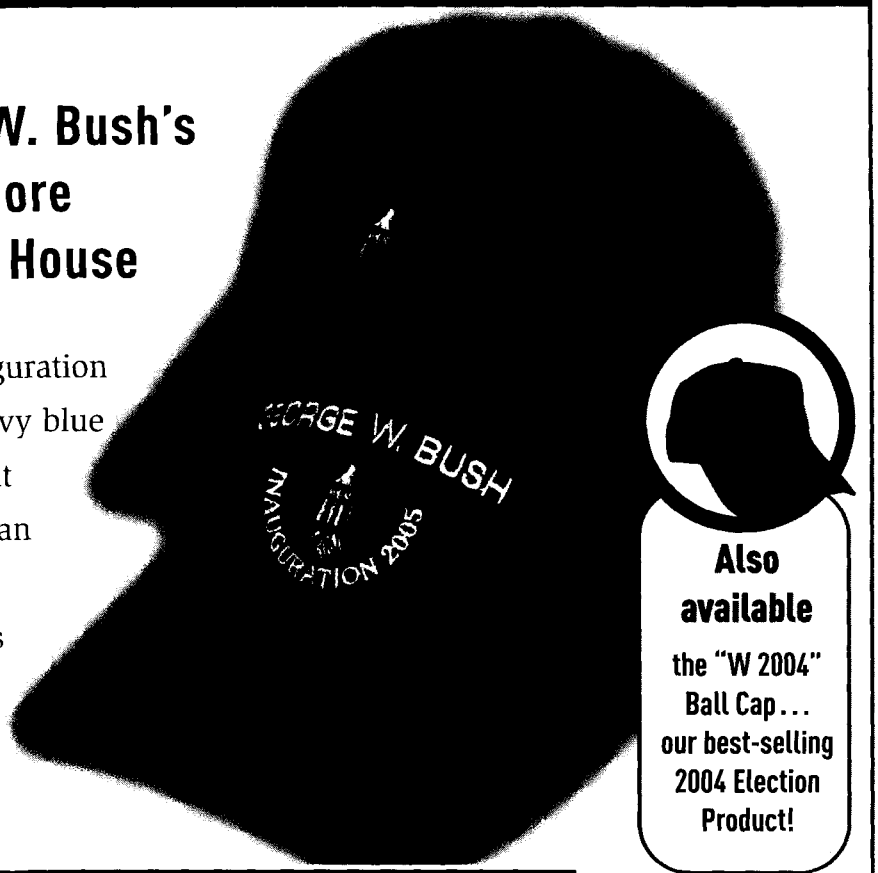

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THE WEEK...

kill in cold blood, but responded to threatened danger in an uncertain environment. His shot may have been tragic, but it was legally and morally licit.

■ Iran has agreed to stop uranium enrichment temporarily while negotiating with Britain, France, and Germany over what it will get for a long-term deal. The agreement allowed the mullahs to dodge a U.N. Security Council referral, which the United States has been pushing as a precursor to more decisive action. Iran's suspension is supposed to build confidence, but the circumstances surrounding it are hardly encouraging. Just days before the suspension was to take effect, Tehran was producing significant amounts of uranium hexafluoride, the input material for enrichment. Around the same time, a prominent Iranian opposition group—the source of previous revelations about Iran's nuclear program—alleged that Tehran had obtained a bomb design and highly enriched uranium from Pakistani nuclear guru Abdul Qadeer Khan, and was carrying on its nuclear-weapons program at a hidden facility. There have also been further reports about Iran's backing of the Iraqi insurgency. Richard Armitage was right when he said recently that Europe's "good cop" shtick is possible only because the United States is being firm with

A Newer Deal

THE black standup comic Chris Rock has a standard routine about the injustice of Social Security. This, he rages, is just another white man's scheme to hold back the black man by taxing him his whole life and then withholding the benefits until after he's dead. "You don't get the money till you're 65; meanwhile, the average black man dies at 54. Hypertension, high blood pressure, NYPD—something'll get you!" Black workers shouldn't have to pay a penny of the unfair payroll tax, Rock opines as he stomps across the stage.

This isn't just another liberal trying cynically to inject race into the policy debate. It turns out Chris Rock has got it about right. Blacks really do get the shaft from the Social Security system. The average life expectancy of a black man is lower than the Social Security retirement age—and many "reformers" want to raise that age still further.

Most Americans realize that the Social Security system is like the *Titanic* headed toward the iceberg. Even the Social Security administration's own accountants admit that the long-term unfunded liability of Social Security is $8-10 trillion, a much larger financial black hole than even the national debt.

Around the year 2016, the retirement system will be in deficit and in each succeeding year that deficit will mount. By 2038, about the time most Generation X-ers will be planning to retire, the Social Security system will be insolvent. Retirees will reach into the federal government's bank vault and find nothing but worthless IOUs.

Even if the program weren't about to capsize financially, there is a bigger problem. The retirement program is a rotten deal for workers. A recent Cato Institute study found that for most groups of young workers, Social Security offers on average a 1.5 percent annual rate of return on the dollars "contributed." As the accompanying chart shows, even a relatively risk-free long-term corporate bond gives a guaranteed 3.5 percent return. The long-term rate of return on stocks is around 7.5 percent.

For black men around Chris Rock's age, the rate of return from Social Security is slightly *negative*: In other words, black men, on average, would be slightly better off if they were able to keep their payroll-tax dollars and stuff them under their mattresses. For many black and Hispanic working couples, the rate of return is less than 1 percent.

George W. Bush is promoting a Social Security modernization plan that would reduce the long-term national debt by trillions of dollars; reduce income inequality; allow working-class Americans to retire with personal nest eggs that would increase their financial wealth and security; and help save the Social Security system from insolvency. This reform plan would also increase by tens of millions of Americans the ranks of the ownership society. Rather than 52 percent of Americans owning stocks and bonds, the Bush plan would increase that share to 80 or perhaps even 90 percent.

Most Democrats in Congress complain that this is a risky scheme that will destroy Social Security. Not so the late, great Daniel Patrick Moynihan, the godfather of Social Security and a proponent of what President Bush has proposed. Moynihan believed that with personal investment accounts most workers would accumulate half a million dollars of wealth over their working years. He once argued that we need a retirement system that "allows working people to end their lives not just with a pension and health-care benefits, but with some wealth. Half a million dollars from a thrift savings plan is a lot to someone who's been working for pay by the hour his whole lifetime. And the doorman will have a half million dollars, not just the fellow who lives in the penthouse suite."

Perhaps the Democrats fear that once low-income workers accumulate so much wealth, they won't be Democrats anymore. Risky indeed!

—STEPHEN MOORE

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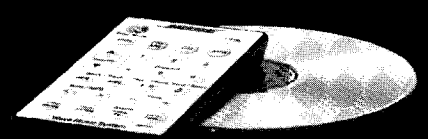

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THE WEEK...

Tehran. Don't be surprised, though, if the "bad cop" has to step in soon, and if attempts to cajole the mullahs into abandoning their nuclear designs prove once again to be illusory.

■ Not all the troubling news out of Iran concerns Tehran's nuclear ambitions. On November 16, an Iranian news service reported that a 14-year-old boy died after receiving 85 lashes, a sentence imposed on him by the judge of a local court. His crime? Breaking the Ramadan fast. A few months ago, you may recall, a 16-year-old girl was also killed—publicly hanged for allegedly having pre-marital sex. Bloggers, journalists, and activists have been imprisoned for supporting reform. Advocates of engaging the Islamic Republic may still talk about a "dialogue of civilizations" and similar niceties, but at the moment little if anything about Iran's mullahcracy seems civilized to us.

■ Four thousand French troops are caught up in a civil war in the Ivory Coast, once part of France's colonial empire. Whatever else they might be doing, they have stirred up a hornet's nest. The mobs are out, and French and other expatriates have had to be evacuated. French women may have been raped. On Radio Vatican, Bernard Cardinal Agre, archbishop of Abidjan, claimed that he had just come from the hospitals where he had seen "young people decapitated by the French army." Ivory Coast president Laurent Gbagbo said that he had not been to the hospitals himself but believed the reports of these atrocities. Sixty-four young people killed and some 1,300 injured by "the murderous bullets of French soldiers." Quite like colonial times, then.

■ NR's recent post-election cruise was a smash success, and a happy omen that our 2005 British Isles voyage—July 10-21, starring WFB, Bob Bork, Larry Kudlow, Peggy Noonan, Paul Johnson, Rich Lowry, Kate O'Beirne, David Pryce-Jones, Jay Nordlinger, et al., joyfully celebrating NR's 50th anniversary—will be the same. Care to join us? For more information, call (800) 707-1634, or visit www.nrcruise.com.

■ The relentless, vindictive war being waged by the ACLU against the Boy Scouts of America took a turn recently when the Defense Department agreed to a settlement in a lawsuit they have been defending for five years. Under the terms of the settlement, the Pentagon will warn military bases to stop sponsoring Boy Scout troops. Serving members of the military may still lead Scout troops on their own time, and the Boy Scouts are still permitted to meet on areas of military bases used by other civilian organizations. In a letter to President Bush protesting the settlement, North Carolina representative Walter Jones notes correctly that the ACLU has "continuously attacked the Boy Scouts for one simple reason: it is an organization founded in a commitment to God and morality." He wonders whether chaplains on military bases will be the next targets. So do we. We wonder, too, how it is that an organization dedicated to the preservation of our liberties works so busily to destroy the social foundations on which those liberties rest.

■ Scott Peterson was convicted for murdering his wife Laci—and for second-degree murder in the case of their unborn son, Conner. The fact that Peterson was convicted of a lesser charge in Conner's case appears to reflect the jury's uncertainty about the degree of premeditation in that killing. The fact that he was convicted of anything at all in Conner's case indicates that the moral intuitions of Americans, including even socially liberal Californians, have not quite caught up with the Supreme Court's abortion jurisprudence. For which we can be thankful.

■ What happens if a homeless person abandons or misplaces his accumulated j— . . . sorry, we mean his *personal property*, those articles typically pushed around in a stolen supermarket cart? (Those carts, by the way, cost supermarkets around $100 each.) Well, in the city of Berkeley, Calif., those articles, together with the cart, are carefully stored away in a refrigerated container. The container cost $8,200. It sits on land leased for $12,300 a year. It is refrigerated to discourage vermin. The refrigerating power costs $3,000 a year. The city faces a $7.5 million deficit this year. But look, this is *Berkeley*. Let city deputy public works director Patrick Keilch elucidate. Mr. Keilch: "Being Berkeley, we're pretty tolerant and we bend over backward. What's the phrase? 'Walk a mile in my shoes.'" While pushing a stolen shopping cart? Mr. Keilch adds that the city spends about $100,000 annually for two people to clean up debris that homeless people leave in public areas. Ah, Berkeley! If you didn't exist, would we have to invent you?

■ In a stirring example of the American genius for hustling up business where no business formerly existed, a South Florida psychologist named Douglas Schooler has been treating John Kerry voters distraught over their candidate's loss on November 2. At the time of writing, more than 20 distraught Kerry supporters have sought treatment. Picking up this ball and running with it, the Boca Raton office (chapter, lodge, whatever) of the American Health Association has diagnosed the Kerryites' disorder as Post Election Selection Trauma (PEST), and has developed a structured counseling program for sufferers. Mr. Schooler describes the symptoms of PEST thus: "They include feelings of extreme anger, despair, hopelessness, powerlessness, a failure to function behaviorally, a sense of disillusionment, of not wanting to vote anymore—that sort of thing." Not wanting to vote anymore? Is there some way to stop this man?

■ Shoppers at Target will no longer hear bells ringing for donations; the Salvation Army Santas have been silenced. Target, along with other big-box stores such as Best Buy, has decided that it can avoid preferential treatment for particular charities by keeping any of them from darkening its door. The company is within its rights, but it has made a bad decision. As Hugh Hewitt observes on his blog, much of the company's revenues in November and December derive from a kind of charitable impulse. To thwart that impulse, to throw up obstacles to its expression, is among other things ungrateful. Target customers should perhaps consider taking their business elsewhere, where the spirit of the Grinch

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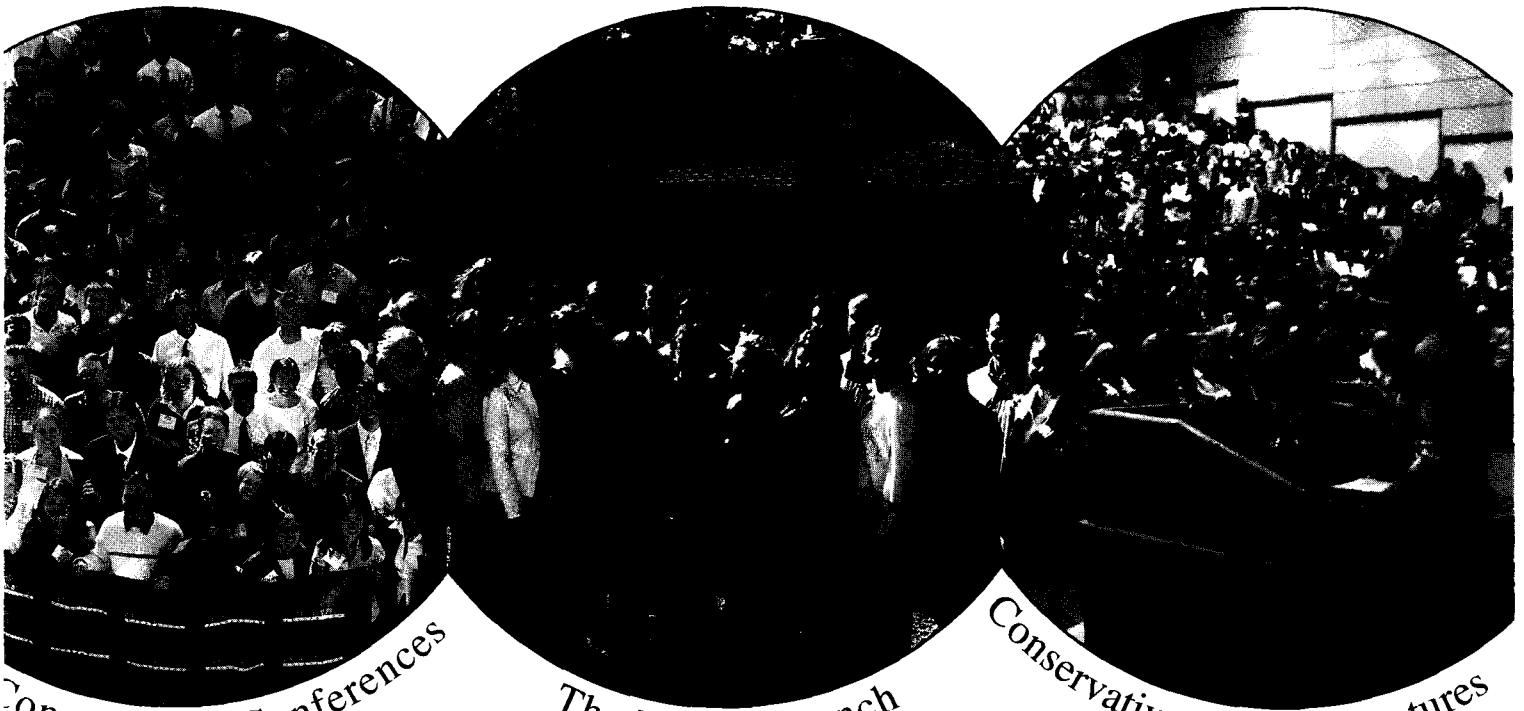

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THE WEEK...

does not prevail, and throwing a few dollars into the red kettle.

■ It may come as a surprise to readers of NATIONAL REVIEW to learn that we once shared a floor of our office building with *Vibe*, a magazine dedicated to the doings of such avant-garde popular musicians as Jadakiss, Snoop Dogg, Ludacris, Ol' Dirty Bastard, Twista, OutKast, Jay-Z, and Ja Rule. Well, a magazine like *Vibe* must naturally sponsor an awards ceremony, to honor excellence in doing whatever it is that Jadakiss and his (her? their?) colleagues do. We regret to report that the solemn proceedings at this year's ceremony were rudely interrupted. "Hip-hop mogul"—there's glory for you!—Dr. Dre was punched by an unidentified young man on stage. A member of the good doctor's entourage, an aspiring artiste known as Young Buck, unhinged by righteous indignation, thereupon produced a knife and stabbed the assailant. The scuttlebutt in *Vibe* circles, with whom we remain on intimate terms, is that this very regrettable incident was arranged by Dr. Dre's longtime nemesis, Suge Knight. Naturally we hope this is not true, and that order and decorum will return to the staid precincts of *Vibe*, where, in happier times, we have enjoyed many a sedate game of whist over petits fours and chamomile tea.

■ After more than 30 years, William Safire is relinquishing his spot on the *New York Times* op-ed page. His commentaries brought a much-needed rationality to the deceptively gray pages of the *Times*, where off-the-wall radicalism typically poses as level-headed consensus. Safire has been criticized for his proneness to conspiracy theorizing; but this bent can certainly be forgiven in a man who spent a key portion of his pre-journalism career working among conspirators. Safire's most important contribution at the *Times* was his steady skepticism about the actions and pretensions of government. He understood that the patriot's task is not to cheer the mighty, but to keep them honest; we expect he will continue, in his post-*Times* career, to be one of America's most valuable center-right voices.

■ President Bush has conferred the National Humanities Medal on some excitingly deserving recipients, including Hilton Kramer. Mr. Kramer may be the finest art critic in the United States, and he is one of its best journalists. A child of immigrants from Russia, he worked on the *New York Times* for 18 years, mainly as chief art critic. Then he did something shocking, almost unimaginable: He left that exalted perch to found his own, small journal, *The New Criterion*. (Mr. Kramer founded the magazine with the pianist and music critic Samuel Lipman.) For over 20 years now, *The New Criterion* has defended culture against the barbarians and philistines who would wreck it. Mr. Kramer is known as a conservative, or even a right-winger; actually, he merely likes liberal democracy and favors standards in literature and the arts—which makes him, in this funny age, a conservative or right-winger. In any case, President Bush bestowed that medal wisely.

■ The same goes for his other selections, among them Gertrude Himmelfarb, Harvey C. Mansfield, and Shelby Steele. The first is one of our more insightful historians, and one of our keener social critics. The second, for years, has been one of the brightest, and sanest, lights at Harvard, and throughout academia. Professor Mansfield is not only a first-rate political scientist, he has also trained many others. And every time you read a Shelby Steele essay, you think, "Yes, exactly. And it's amazing someone said it, and so well!"

■ The man *Washington Post* editor Ben Bradlee called a "miserable, carping, retromingent vigilante" died on November 16, aged 82. Reed Irvine, founder of Accuracy in Media, thought this graceless comment such a compliment to his work exposing the *Post*'s liberal prejudices that he kept the letter framed on his office wall. When Irvine created AIM "with a check for $200" in 1969, the television networks and leading newspapers believed themselves to be above criticism from the ordinary public, let alone from an obscure Federal Reserve economist like Mr. Irvine. In later years, he adopted narrower and more peculiar complaints about the media, such as that they were incurious about the death of Vincent Foster; but by that time he had already gone far toward establishing the bias of the establishment media. If reasonable observers may nowadays justly assume, rather than debate, that bias, it is in no small part because of Reed Irvine's work. R.I.P.

■ Two important American poets died recently, a major loss to our poetry. They were alike in important ways, radically dissimilar in others. Viewed historically, they learned from but also quietly rebelled against the aesthetic extremes of the great modernists, Eliot, Yeats, and Pound, and sought power through concentration on traditional form, precision of language, and metrical virtuosity. Anthony Hecht was by far the darker of the two. As an infantryman during the war, he had been present at the opening of Flossenberg death camp, and the Holocaust became a metaphor for universal evil. His verse sometimes employs echoes of the Hebrew Bible. Donald Justice, more gently touched by *sunt lachrymae rerum*, was equally a master of traditional form and wove traditional themes through his verse. Neither man deliberately affirmed his own greatness, unlike the big modernists. Eliot's poems follow the pilgrimage in *The Divine Comedy*, Pound's *Cantos* are based on *The Odyssey*, and Yeats's major poetry emerges from a grand scheme of Western history. Hecht and Justice avoided hitting the long ball and concentrated on the moment, through which they glimpsed the permanent. Their excellence occupied a very large territory in contemporary American poetry. R.I.P.

■ Ichthyophages beware! PETA—that is, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals—has launched a Fish Empathy Project in the hope of discouraging us from mistreating our finned friends by such practices as catching and eating them. Sometime soon you may expect to see a school—sorry, a grouper—sorry, a *group of* PETA demonstrators perched outside your local seafood restaurant, perhaps chanting: "No justice, no plaice!" Or: "Hey hey, ho ho,

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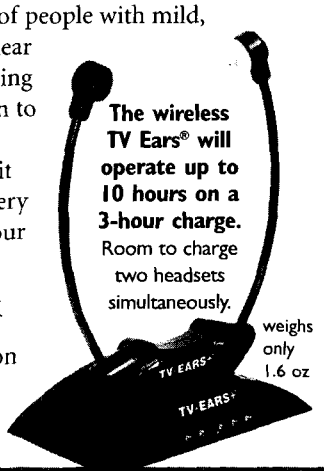

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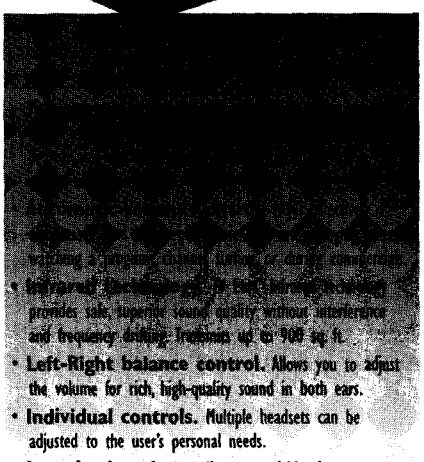

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bouillabaisse has got to go!" What the net effect of all this carping will be, only a sucker would try to guess; but in our opinion, if the American public really gets hooked on Fish Empathy, it'll be a fluke.

THE U.N.

Den of Thieves

U.N. secretary general Kofi Annan should either resign, if he is honorable, or be removed, if he is not. The mild-mannered Annan may not himself be corrupt. But he has presided over no less than the largest corruption scandal in the history of the world, Oil for Food. Never has the U.N. been more disrespectable or useless. Moreover, Annan's response to the scandal has been inadequate to the point of disgrace. That he still holds his post is testament to the culture of impunity that pervades the organization.

Annan's apparently congenital reluctance to move forcefully when necessity requires stems partly from his corporatist background: He has worked for the U.N. almost continuously since 1962. He is the original Organization Man, the first of the seven secretaries general to ascend to the top of the greasy pole from entirely within the U.N. He lacks the drive, and the desire, to tame the beast he inherited. Annan is a man willingly in thrall to his employer's unaccountable and inefficient bureaucracy, and a servant of its patronage machine.

To this end—protecting the U.N.'s comfortable status quo and keeping the gravy train rolling along—he has hindered efforts to uncover the massive scale of the Oil for Food fraud, a fraud involving his own staff. Through Paul Volcker, the former Federal Reserve chairman who heads Annan's "independent" commission looking into the Iraqi affair, he has apparently refused to release 55 internal audit reports and other key documents, such as interviews with senior U.N. staff, to a Senate investigative committee.

Though his commission lacks subpoena power, possesses little transparency, and labors under almost no external oversight—what else could be expected of a U.N. commission?—Volcker has promised to circulate a full, detailed report on the fraud next year. Already, however, five congressional hearings and three federal departmental investigations are discovering that the scandal is even larger than once believed: As much as $21.3 billion disappeared (double the original estimates), allegedly with the connivance of senior U.N. bureaucrats, foreign banks, and certain members of the Security Council. Some of this money was diverted into the pockets of the families of Palestinian suicide bombers; some of it was skimmed off to sympathetic agents of influence in the form of bribes; some of it was spent on purchasing munitions and illegal weaponry; and some of it, no doubt, is being used to fund the insurgency killing Coalition personnel in Iraq and, lest we forget, Iraqi civilians and officials as well.

The Oil for Food scheme was originally established to provide humanitarian aid for Iraqis suffering from Saddam Hussein's manipulation of the sanctions regime to sway international public opinion. How unpleasantly ironic, then, that the very same scheme became part of that very same manipulation thanks to the very same people trusted to prevent that manipulation. One would think, if only to clear his own conscience, that Annan would use this opportunity to pursue any leads energetically and, for once, force the U.N. to clean house—from top to bottom and in full view of the public so that the secretariat might salvage at least some semblance of moral authority from this disaster.

In October 2003, in another irony, the U.N. General Assembly adopted the "United Nations Convention against Corruption." At the time, Annan said, "Corruption hurts the poor disproportionately—by diverting funds intended for development, undermining a government's ability to provide basic services, feeding inequality and injustice, and discouraging foreign investment and aid." Wise words.

Annan seems intent on finishing his term of office, which ends in 2006. Two more years of defending his errant subordinates from exposure and possible criminal proceedings would be two years too many. Annan must assume responsibility for their malfeasance—and make way for a new secretary general who sees reform of the United Nations as his primary task.

THE MIDDLE EAST

A Horrible Life

YASSER ARAFAT was responsible for years of murder and bloodshed, for civil war, for the hijacking of aircraft and other acts of terror, for gun-running, for embezzlement and blackmail and bribery. His racist fantasies have polluted far and wide.

Lying was his one great skill. He was able to persuade the watching world that his long career of crime was actually a national liberation movement. A man of his time, he had understood that the manufacture of the Palestinians into a Third World and anti-imperialist cause was certain to win him general applause. And it proved so. The Soviet Union took him up, and then the United Nations, the Saudi royals, other Arab dictators (including Saddam Hussein), and the European Union too. The more he urged on jihad and killing, and the more money he stole to finance corruption and death, the louder the acclaim he received. In an episode from the theater of the absurd, he received the Nobel Peace Prize for signing a treaty that he had no intention of keeping.

The historian Lord Acton once observed that behind every despot comes an apologist with a sponge. A BBC reporter wept to see Arafat leave his West Bank headquarters on his final flight to a military hospital in Paris. The *Guardian* compared him to Moses, and the thriller writer John Le Carré described him as "cuddly," recalling how once he had put his hand on Arafat's chest to feel the Palestinian heart. CNN called him a "revolutionary romantic figure comparable to Ho Chi Minh and Nelson Mandela," a comparison that ought to earn the latter substantial damages for libel. Jacques Chirac praised Arafat as a man of "courage and conviction," and some French municipalities are considering naming streets for him. The U.N. flew its flag at half

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mast, an honor it withheld from Ronald Reagan earlier this year.

Such confused and sickly sentimentality reveals the moral degradation of the age. These and the many other apologists are sponging away the record as though crime committed on a large enough scale is worthy of praise and commemoration.

The damage Arafat did to the entire Arab world is irreparable. He and his men killed huge numbers of other Arabs in Jordan and Lebanon, and ensured that Palestinians could no longer lead settled lives anywhere, expelled by the hundreds of thousands from Kuwait and Saudi Arabia as a consequence of Arafat's misjudgments. He did succeed, however, in building a ghastly stereotype of the Palestinian and the Arab as an unreasoning thug for whom terror replaces argument. The standing invitation to Israel to commit suicide only led to more and more pointless deaths of both Jews and Arabs.

In reality, Palestinians were people in need of justice and peace, and they never asked to be fodder for Arafat's cause. He talked of giving them a state, but then refused to take the measures necessary for doing so. Instead of the humdrum peacetime business of administration and governance, he taught them to kill and to hate, so that they became victims with no chance of escaping their victimhood. The many Palestinians who mobbed Arafat's coffin before burial had evidently internalized the lying of decades. Their future depends on recognizing as soon as possible how Arafat cheated them of livelihood and statehood, indeed of hope itself.

notes & asides

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: A question has bothered me for years. Recently, to find an answer, I consulted *Britannica* (1945) under the headings "time" and "calendar" and came up short. The question: In the designations B.C. and A.D., why is the first in English and the second in Latin?

All good wishes,
Anthony Carroll
Garden City, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Carroll: Well, here's the story. For quite a while they used "P.C."—Pre Christo. But somebody in the Colosseum took a stand against it, shouting out ("clamavit fortiter") that P.C. was too PC to bandy about, whereupon Averroes led the movement to change it to B.C. He was thought neutral in the matter, since he was of course a Muslim.

Cordially, WFB

■ Dear Bill: The word "jazz" doesn't turn up very often in the pages of National Review so I read the paragraph about Jazz at Lincoln Center in the issue that arrived today with interest.

Whoever wrote the paragraph is correct to say that Wynton Marsalis was under the sway of Albert Murray and Stanley Crouch, and that he is now considerably less belligerent regarding the black/white thing. What I don't know is whether it is mellowing or simple expediency. His problem is that most of the first-rate musicians who play in the older traditions are white, and in recent years these guys have been turning up on concert programs. Bob Wilber for Sidney Bechet, Terry Waldo for Scott Joplin. If Dick Wellstood had lived he'd have been asked to become Fats Waller. The fact that he isn't around is perhaps why I haven't seen any Waller concerts or tributes.

I feel Marsalis deserves great credit for being in the forefront of marshaling all the forces required to bring off the new complex. It is truly remarkable, but how they'll keep it fully booked and funded is another matter.

Perhaps he is mellowing, and if I were to ask him about some of his earlier intemperate statements, my guess is he'd fall back on the title of the old Oscar Levant song, "Blame It on My Youth." An excuse, just not a very good one.

Best regards,
Hank O'Neal
New York, N.Y.

Dear Hank: We're all set to let Wynton Marsalis play—and sing.

Warmest, Bill

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: My first inspection of *Miles Gone By* was in the index, where I searched for the name of Dick (Richie) O'Neill (R.I.P.), a dear friend, coworker, and boss/editor at Time & Life's *House & Home* for ten years and at McGraw-Hill for six. You described him perfectly, although I recall that when those in the ASTP [Army Specialized Training Program] were summarily tossed from academia into the infantry in 1944, Dick was sent to France, not Okinawa. He did have an older brother, a Marine lieutenant, who was killed on Bougainville (shot through the throat, and bled to death before he could be reached).

During our Time & Life years, some four or five of the associate editors (the lowest denomination of employees, except, of course, for ad salesmen) would imbibe lunch at Brio, an Italian restaurant on 47th Street. Imbibe, by the way, is the precise word to describe the meal which always began with two, sometimes three, martinis, made exactly as the bartender was taught by our Bob Murray, a true aficionado of those clear, white deaths. How we ever returned to put out a magazine the rest of the afternoon, I cannot say, except that youth is blessed with a hugely impervious liver. Dick was always a member of the club, and my happy memories of that camaraderie will go with me to my grave. We didn't drink after we went to McGraw-Hill, a different corporate ambiance; also, martinis were not the liquid of choice at 42nd Street and Ninth Avenue.

Best regards,
Jim Gallagher
Berkley, Mich.

Dear Mr. Gallagher: Thanks for the update on my roommate at college for four years. There is a picture in *Miles Gone By*.

Cordially,

—WFB

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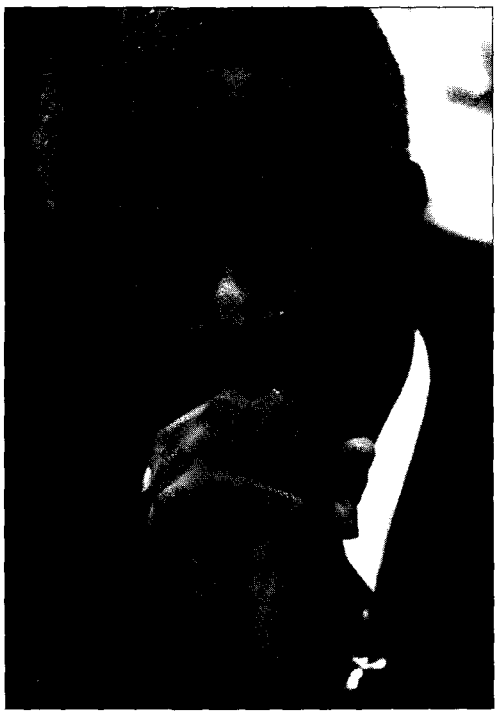

■ COVER STORY ■

Kofi's Hour Is Up

Incompetence upon insult upon outrage

NILE GARDINER

THIS has been a wretched year for Kofi Annan. The U.N. secretary general has looked a forlorn figure on the world stage: Hugely overshadowed as a global leader by George W. Bush and Tony Blair, he has appeared weak and clueless in confronting major problems, including terrorism, WMD proliferation in Iran and elsewhere, and genocide in Sudan. At the same time, the massive scandal over the U.N.'s administration of the Iraq Oil for Food program has brought the world body's reputation to an all-time low. To cap it all, in the wake of a series of internal scandals, the U.N.'s own employee union has just passed a vote of no confidence in the U.N.'s senior management: a thinly veiled protest against Annan himself.

Mr. Gardiner is Fellow in Anglo-American Security Policy at the Heritage Foundation. He has written extensively on Kofi Annan, the United Nations, and the Oil for Food scandal.

The secretary general is now an embittered spectator of world events, and lets barely a week pass without a sermon on the perils of America's supposedly unilateralist foreign policy. A spectacular failure, as well as a great mediocrity, Annan is looking increasingly ineffectual and isolated. His attacks on the U.S. over its decision to go to war with Iraq indicate a U.N. in steep, possibly terminal decline, struggling for relevance.

As for the Oil for Food scandal, it is more than just the biggest scandal in the U.N.'s history; it may well be the biggest financial fraud in modern times. Set up in the mid-1990s as a means of providing humanitarian aid to Iraqis, the Oil for Food program was subverted and manipulated by Saddam Hussein's regime, allegedly with the complicity of U.N. officials, to help prop up the Iraqi dictator. Saddam's dictatorship was able to siphon an estimated $21.3 billion from the program through oil smuggling and systematic thievery, by demanding illegal payments from companies buying Iraqi oil and kickbacks from those selling goods to Iraq. All this took place under the noses of U.N. bureaucrats: According to the report of U.S. weapons inspector Charles Duelfer, Benon Sevan—Annan's appointee as executive director of the Iraq program—received from Saddam a voucher for 13 million barrels of oil.

On Capitol Hill, Oil for Food has become one of the hottest investigative issues in years, with huge amounts of evidence indicating corruption and bribery on an epic scale. The program is now being investigated by no fewer than five congressional committees: the Senate Foreign Relations Committee; the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations; the House International Relations Committee; the House Subcommittee on National Security, Emerging Threats and International Relations; and the House Committee on Energy and Commerce. Several other committees are also likely to launch investigations. In addition, there are three U.S. federal investigations underway—by the General Accounting Office, the Department of Justice, and the U.S. Treasury. In a further embarrassment for Annan, the Justice Department is investigating his son, Kojo, in connection with his role as a paid consultant to Cotecna Inspection SA, a Swiss-based company that received a contract for inspecting goods shipped to Iraq under the Oil for Food program.

Highly damaging questions are being asked regarding Kofi Annan himself: Did the secretary general turn a blind eye to U.N. mismanagement and corruption in overseeing the Oil for Food program? Did he sympathize with the efforts of Saddam and key members of the Security Council to lift U.N. sanctions against Iraq? Was he influenced in his decision-making regarding the program by his son's involvement with Cotecna? The secretary general's refusal to cooperate with congressional investigators has led to widespread anger and exasperation on Capitol Hill. Sen. Norm Coleman, the Republican chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on

RICHARD DREW/AP

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Investigations, and his Democratic counterpart, Carl Levin, accused Annan of "interfering with our ability to get information we need" from the U.N. Speaking to CNN, Coleman blasted the U.N. for "proactively interfering with our investigation."

Frustration is also growing in Congress with former Federal Reserve chief Paul Volcker, who was appointed by Annan to head the U.N.'s own "independent" investigation into Oil for Food. Volcker, possibly acting under instruction from his employer, has so far refused to release 55 internal U.N. audits of Oil for Food. The refusal to hand over these audits to congressional investigators suggests that their contents may be hugely damaging to the reputation of Annan and the U.N. leadership. Volcker has also rejected requests from the Senate for U.N. officials to be made available to testify before Congress.

The Volcker Commission has been plagued with controversy from the outset, highlighted by the resignation of Anna Di Lellio, Volcker's director of communications and a former U.N. employee. Di Lellio stepped down after it was revealed she had given a 2002 interview to London's *Guardian* newspaper, in which she implicitly compared President George W. Bush to Osama bin Laden: "I see the major threats coming from ourselves, rather than the east. I find deeply unsettling both the ascendance of George Bush and his puppeteers to the U.S. government, and the mix of self-serving hypocrisy and incompetence prevailing in European governments. I don't like it that the two nations whose citizenship I hold, Italy and the U.S., have leased their institutions to a couple of families. With defenders like W. and Berlusconi, largely unchecked by a sycophantic media, who needs bin Laden to destroy culture, personal freedom, respect for other human beings, integrity, and the rule of law—all the things that make our lives worthwhile?"

Di Lellio was forced out, but the episode helped fuel doubt on the Hill regarding the supposed independence of the Volcker inquiry, which is completely funded by the U.N. to the tune of $30 million—using funds from the Oil for Food program itself. The commission's operations are shrouded in secrecy, with little external oversight. For a commission designed to unearth corruption and malpractice on a huge scale, it is strikingly opaque. There is increasing suspicion in Washington that the "independent inquiry" may be no more than a whitewash exercise, controlled by the secretary general himself.

Annan needs to control the inquiry because he can ill afford further blows to his reputation. It is inconceivable that he was unaware of the scale of the fraud being carried out by Saddam Hussein; this, combined with Annan's record of failure over Iraq, his lack of commitment to confronting terrorism, and his rapidly declining credibility as a leader on the world stage, amounts to a powerful case for his resignation. Indeed, the man who did nothing to prevent the genocide in Rwanda when he was head of U.N. peacekeeping operations in the mid-1990s has been woefully out of depth ever since his appointment as secretary general in 1997. Annan has been a shameless appeaser of dictators, and his only legacy will be his organization's growing irrelevance.

If Annan were the CEO of a Fortune 500 company, with his organization facing allegations of serious corruption and mismanagement and a massive congressional investigation, he would have been forced to resign months ago. Only in a bloated bureaucracy such as the U.N., where a culture of arrogance and unaccountability has reigned for decades, can a leader remain in power in the face of such turmoil. Fortunately, the great sense of moral outrage on Capitol Hill over the Oil for Food scandal may bring this culture to an end. It is only a matter of time before senior senators and congressmen call for Annan's resignation. Congress holds the purse strings of U.S. funding for the U.N., and if it chooses to, it can force changes even in this most hidebound of institutions.

Future U.S. funding of the United Nations should depend on substantial, not cosmetic, reform. The outcry over Oil for Food may ultimately lead to a reformed, streamlined, and transparent U.N. Annan should get out, well before his term expires at the end of 2006; prospective candidates are already jockeying for position. The U.N. needs to clean up its act and make a fresh start; Annan's resignation may not be a cure for the U.N.'s ills, but it would be a step in the right direction. **NR**

■ **THE ADMINISTRATION**

A Conservative Departs

About Colin Powell

JOHN O'SULLIVAN

COLIN POWELL left office with the jeers of his liberal friends and admirers ringing in his ears. In an unusually vicious *New York Times* editorial titled "Good Soldier Powell," the retiring secretary of state was told that he would be remembered solely for having given false information to the U.N. Security Council about Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction.

It seems an odd assertion from a newspaper that had, after all, published the very same claims on its front page long before Powell spoke. If Powell is culpable for relaying false information, the *Times* is presumably even more culpable for making that information available in the first place. Should we therefore forget every other story in the *Times*, and remember only its "false" reports of WMDs?

Well, I—for one—won't do it. No, no. I insist on remembering many other *Times* reports, including the denials of Stalin's contrived Ukrainian famine (and of the millions of deaths it caused) that the *Times* published from its Moscow correspondent (and Soviet agent) Walter Duranty in the 1930s. Nor were Duranty's reports merely "false." They were outright deliberate shameless lies concocted to cover up mass murder. Yet the *Times* was, until recently, boasting of the Pulitzer Prize that Duranty received for them; only this year it fought to prevent that prize from being rescinded by the Pulitzer committee.

So how can the newspaper that is bravely standing by its very own Holocaust denial wax so indignant about Secretary Powell's retailing intelligence

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reports that everybody believed to be true at the time and that he later disavowed when some of them proved to be false? It is possible, of course, that the *Times* has simply forgotten its role in the downfall of Saddam Hussein. More likely, however, is that the ill temper of the *Times* had little to do with the merits of Powell's speech to the U.N. The paper wished to cause Powell pain because he had not played the role they had hoped in the Bush administration.

The *Times*, the *Washington Post*, the Democrats, the Europeans, the liberal foreign-policy establishment, the media in general, and all the usual suspects believed that Powell was their man inside the administration—their Duranty, so to speak—who would cleverly frustrate the neoconservative designs of the Bush team. So when he advanced those designs instead—and, worse, publicly defended them—they felt doubly betrayed. Their hostility to him now reflects that sense of betrayal.

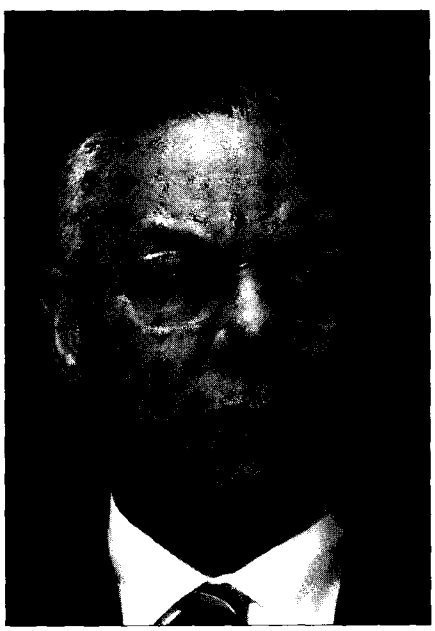
But it is misplaced. Powell never betrayed them because he was never the dissident liberal statesman of their hopes or of conservatives' fears.

Consider his career. He achieved his present eminence as secretary of state by rising to the top of the national-security hierarchy, the armed forces, and the Republican party, in that order. It is one of the most remarkable careers in American history—doubly so for the black son of Jamaican immigrants who was born when official segregation was still widespread in the U.S., including the armed forces.

But it is not the career of a liberal. And it was achieved in large part owing to the patronage of three Republican presidents—in particular the patronage of Ronald Reagan, of whom Powell still speaks with great affection. If Powell had secretly harbored liberal convictions in his rise, there was no sign of it in the jobs he held. His best-known "political" action as chairman of the Joint Chiefs, for instance, was his shrewd derailing of President Clinton's early attempt to admit open gays into the military.

Insofar as liberals could persuade themselves that he was one of them, it was because he was pro-choice and a supporter of affirmative action. But Powell's position on those two issues is shared by Rudy Giuliani, Pete Wilson, and many other moderate-to-conservative Republicans. If we were to examine Powell's views in detail, we might even find that he is prepared to accept such limits on the "abortion right" as parental notification and that his definition of affirmative action does not include race and gender preferences.

If Powell is not a liberal, then, what is he? The answer is very simple: Powell is a conservative—but a conservative of an old-fashioned, pre-ideological kind, moderate, prudent and cautious, suspicious of sweeping radical innovations, and respectful of existing institutions like the State Department and of the accumulated expertise they embody.



GEORGE BRIDGES/KRT

That is why he was chosen by President Bush as his secretary of state. In the 2000 election campaign Bush had repeatedly made clear that he wanted a foreign policy that was modest, cautious, and even "humble" insofar as it would show a decent respect for the opinion of America's allies. Since Powell was both widely respected abroad and temperamentally disposed to favor the president's wishes, he was the ideal executor of a foreign policy rooted in prudence.

We will never know how successful he might have been, however, because nine months later September 11 changed everything. Facing a revolutionary challenge, Bush adopted a radical counter-revolutionary strategy in the War on Terror. And Powell found himself helping to implement it. In doing so, Powell has come under three sorts of critical attack. Liberals such as the *Times* editorialist claim that he failed in his duty to halt a war in which he disbelieved; conservatives that he delayed and obstructed the prosecution of that war; and both that he waged a bureaucratic battle of leaks to gain credit with both the president and his liberal critics.

Like its surrounding contextual belief that Powell was a secret dissident, the liberal view that Powell was strongly opposed to the Iraq war is an exaggeration at best. Powell let it be known (via Bob Woodward and others) that he disliked some of the arguments and methods used by the administration to fight and justify the war. But he supported it in public. His U.N. testimony, as the *Times* bitterly acknowledges, was a major factor in "selling" the war to Americans even if it failed with its primary audience. And in his statement of resignation Secretary Powell cited the liberation of Iraq (and of Afghanistan) as achievements of which he was especially proud.

The charge of obstructionism is also just wide of the mark. Bush got what he wanted from his administration in fighting the war—a radical at the Pentagon and a conservative at State. Rumsfeld was Bush's id as Powell was his superego. Both played their allotted parts. Rumsfeld urged radical military tactics to gain a swift victory in both wars; Powell wanted a conservative diplomatic strategy of winning over allies and gaining the legitimacy of U.N. approval even if it meant a slower endgame. And both can claim some justification—a swift military victory was achieved but it has been plagued by questions of illegitimacy ever since. Seeking allied support and U.N. approval may have seemed like obstruction at the time; in retrospect, however, it seems—well—prudent.

But there is some substance, as Anne Applebaum argued in a *Washington Post* column that is rumored to have wounded Powell, in the third charge that he was disingenuous: loyal to Bush's war in public but more reserved in private. Powell here was playing the traditional bureaucratic game of seeking to win turf battles by weakening his administration rivals through leaks to the media. Together with the CIA, he did indeed weaken the

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Pentagon's hold over postwar Iraq policy. With Bush, however, these tactics were dangerous even when they worked. He saw them as disloyal—as Rumsfeld realized, telling his aides not to respond to the leaks from State early in the administration. And the *less* they worked, the more Powell expressed his frustrations as control of foreign (and Iraq) policy slipped away from the State Department to the White House. The net effect was that both the secretary of state and his department became increasingly perfunctory even in their chosen role of fighting a radical war by diplomatic methods. They less and less argued the administration's case on Iraq and the War on Terror to the European allies. One might say they were MIO—Missing in Office.

Powell's underlying difficulty, in retrospect, was that he was a conservative statesman in a revolutionary age. He was temperamentally averse to the radical changes in policy required by the new international situation.

That actually had a more damaging effect on other policies than on Iraq. In particular, the State Department, to which Powell often deferred, failed to re-examine its long-term policy of encouraging European integration despite accumulating evidence that the EU increasingly sought to become a rival superpower and an anti-American "counterweight" in a multipolar world. What is now needed is a reassessment of U.S. policy towards the EU that would both discourage this European supranation-building and take precautionary steps to forge an alternative alliance with Britain and the rest of the "Anglosphere" if the Atlantic alliance splits.

That task of reassessment now falls to Condi Rice, assisted, ideally, by a John Bolton or a Paul Wolfowitz, both of whom are realistic about the EU. But Powell himself might still play a vital role. As someone respected throughout Europe, he could lead the necessary campaign to counter the anti-Americanism that threatens to divide the alliance. And if the task is to bring Britain over following an Atlantic split, he has relatives in both Jamaica and London where, incidentally, he is "Sir Colin."

And the post of U.S. ambassador to the Court of St. James happens to be vacant just now. **NR**

■ **THE MIDDLE EAST**

Absolutely

Both Iraqis and Palestinians have a chance to escape the curse of absolutism

DAVID PRYCE-JONES

In January 2005, elections are to be held in Iraq and the Palestinian Authority. There are hopes that both elections will mark a break with an unbearable tyrannical past, and throw up new leaders who will have enough legitimacy to modernize and democratize the two societies.

Every existing democracy has been through some such drama, when either peacefully or violently a people has devised the means to replace absolutism with representative government. Nothing prevents Arabs from following the many past examples of opting for democracy and institutionalizing it. Ask any Arab what form of government he would prefer, and he is virtually certain to reply, "Democracy." And what does this mean? At the very least, some sort of accountability for the leadership, and a respect for human rights.

Arab history and society, unfortunately, present a consistent record of absolutism, and there is no base on which to build democracy. On the contrary, Arab rulers have always understood that democracy and Western power go together, and have somehow to be defeated together, either by resistance or trickery. In that spirit—and as long ago as 1830—Muhammad Ali, then absolute ruler of Egypt, told the young Disraeli, who was visiting him, "I will have as many parliaments as the king of England. But I have made up my mind, to prevent inconvenience, to elect them myself."

To prevent inconvenience in his turn, Saddam Hussein was the sole candidate in presidential elections, his gunmen were out on the street, and he obtained a 100 percent vote. In 1996 Yasser Arafat arranged for an elderly schoolmistress to stand against him, his gunmen were out on the street, and he obtained 88 percent of the vote. Both absolute rulers duly claimed legitimacy. Without irony or sarcasm, all sorts of people, including successive French presidents, described Saddam and Arafat as properly elected, and humbly addressed them as "Mr. President." After Arafat's death, the U.N. flew its flag at half mast, a mark of respect it did not show President Reagan.

The respective scales and resources of Iraq and the PA are so very different that the similarities between Saddam's absolutism and Arafat's are all the more telling. Both men enriched themselves. The U.N. Oil for Food program, and other scams, gave Saddam at least $21 billion, and perhaps twice that. With the money, he bought loyalty, built palaces, and ensured the financial future of his family abroad (plus a mistress). Given his much more limited circumstances, it was a staggering feat for Arafat to skim off $3 to $5 billion from naïve sponsors such as the European Union and Israeli governments blinded by the Oslo Accords. He too bought loyalty, and villas for his cronies rather than palaces for himself. *Il Corriere della Sera* reports that Mahmoud Abbas, a possible successor after the elections, struck a deal with Arafat's widow, Suha, whereby she is to receive $22 million a year from Arafat's secret accounts. The average annual wage in the Gaza Strip is $600.

Again, the scale was different, but Arafat's brutality was comparable to Saddam's. Both killed enemies and dissidents to the limit of their capacity, by the hundreds of thousands in Saddam's case, by the thousands in Arafat's. The late chairman's security services have killed more Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza than they have Israelis, and they have killed many times more than the Israelis have ever killed in resisting successive insurgencies. Gunmen shoot victims in broad daylight and saunter away untouched from the crime, never to be arrested. Unfortunate men are accused of collaboration with Israel, brought before a tribunal without benefit of a lawyer or witnesses, and shot or sometimes lynched. Among those tortured in prison are journalists and human-rights activists.

Finally, Saddam and Arafat equally made sure to keep would-be successors

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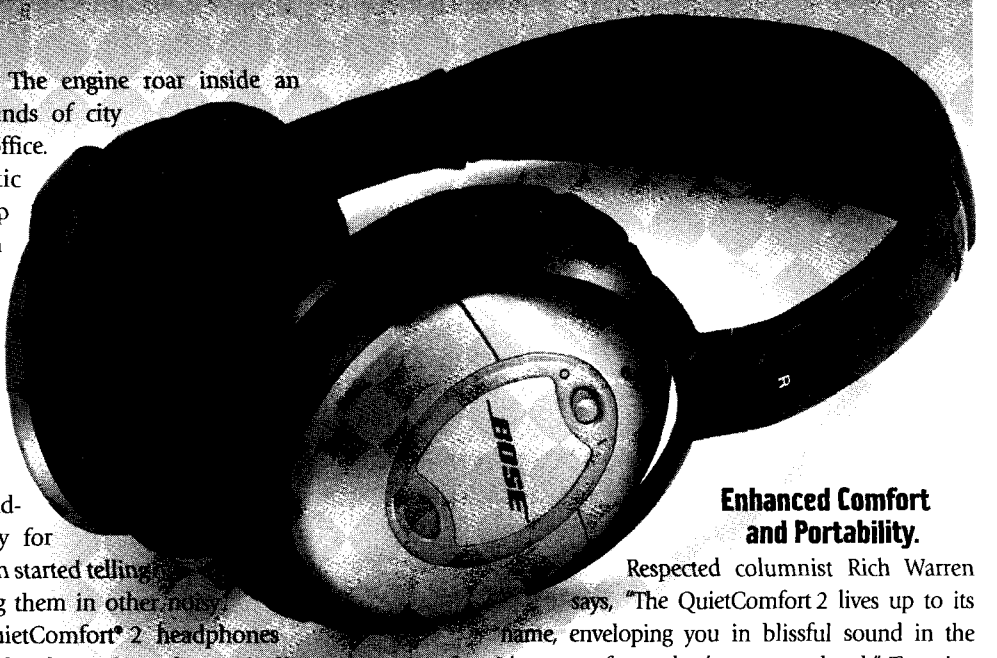

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under firm control. When his elder son, Uday, went too far, Saddam had him ambushed, shot up, and crippled. Pressured by the United States to delegate power, Arafat appointed first Mahmoud Abbas as prime minister, and then Ahmed Qurei, two figureheads whom he knew to have neither the will nor the capacity to limit his absolutism. That sleight of hand was a textbook example of satisfying Western pressures by erecting an empty form of democracy while preventing any inconvenience to the absolute ruler.

In Iraq and the PA, there are now completing electoral rolls, and handfuls of brave spirits are discussing parties and candidates in small but select meetings. In both cases, one-man outfits are struggling to emerge as genuine interest groups. But the elections are to take place in the political deserts created by the previous twin absolutisms. In the absence of any agreed process for power-sharing, those with ambitions are likely to assert themselves in the only available way, namely through violence. In the absence of rallies and fliers and stickers, guns and suicide bombers are the habitual means of persuasion. In Iraq, Moqtada al-Sadr and Abu Musab al-Zarqawi have mobilized their separate gangs to terrorize their way into power. They claim to be speaking for the Shia and Sunni respectively, but this is a tactic to raise a mass militia behind them. Both are operating according to the strict logic of absolutism, which dictates that whoever wants spoils must seize them, and everyone else can go to the wall. The same logic explains why Moqtada al-Sadr is accused of arranging the murder of a rival cleric (and is likely never to have to answer for it, thanks to the gunmen he can call up). In Fallujah, the U.S. Marines uncovered the headquarters where Zarqawi was behaving like a perfect mini-Saddam, in charge of a torture chamber, corpses, and lists of other men to be executed.

A warm embrace in Baghdad

EPA

These practices are naturally duplicated in Gaza. The first moment Mahmoud Abbas—the new and perhaps temporary president—appeared there in public, gunmen from one of Arafat's security services opened fire and killed two of Abbas's guards. Whoever is responsible for organizing this bloodshed is merely staking out serious political ambitions that others must respect.

Military success in Fallujah shows that the government of Iyad Allawi well understands that there is only one way to overcome the reliance of absolutism on force, and that is to deploy superior force to break it. This is also the prerequisite for elections and power-sharing. Those who suspect that they are going to lose the privileges of absolute rule have also understood that they must do everything possible to prevent such a catastrophe. The fall of Saddam has completely shaken his fellow Sunnis, and they are desperately trying to recover monopoly power through every means at their disposal. Their last resort is to intimidate voters and to try to cripple the election by boycotting it.

In the PA, Hamas and other Islamic extremists represent somewhere between a quarter and a third of the Palestinians, not enough to win an election but quite enough to be inconvenient. Hesitating so far to go for the big Zarqawi-inspired option of all-out violence and civil war with the PLO and its factions, Hamas is also intimidating the street and threatening to boycott the proposed January elections.

Obviously, the hazards of anarchy and civil war are real, and the outcome must be uncertain, but next January's elections could mark a first storming of the ancient citadel of Arab absolutism, which so far has been strong enough to frustrate all attempts to reform it from within or without. Should that prove the case, then it would be an example to the rest of the Arab world, and the United States will have created the circumstances, performing a human duty that no other power could. **NR**

■ **CAMPAIGN 2004**

A Dent That Counts

How do Republicans win black and Hispanic votes? Well, first you have to ask . . .

RICHARD NADLER

WHILE Ken Mehlman and Karl Rove raided suburbs and exurbs for unregistered Republicans, a small group of non-party irregulars laid siege to the Democratic citadel: the minority precincts Al Gore carried by huge majorities in 2000.

This year, conservative 527s spent roughly $3 million to run 30,000 broadcast spots courting voters via Spanish-language and black media. On November 3, I reported the results of these efforts to Dan Perrin, executive director of the Republican Leadership Coalition. "Kerry outpolled Bush 84-16 among blacks in Ohio, and 86-13 in Florida," I told him. "And he outpolled Bush 56-44 among Hispanics in New Mexico."

"That's fantastic!" Dan exclaimed. "Let's get out a press release right away!"

So it went in the wacky world of Republican minority politics. Bad news was our stock in trade. In 2000, Democrats had taken 90 percent of the African-American vote to the Republicans' 9, and the Hispanic vote went for the Democrats 64-35. Many consultants considered an electoral assault against these bastions of liberal loyalty a waste of time and resources.

In 2004, the good news for Republicans was not that the GOP had won minority support (clearly, it hadn't)—but that it was winning marginal increases. Nationwide, exit polls showed Bush's vote share increasing 2 percent among blacks and

Mr. Nadler is executive director of America's Majority, a not-for-profit dedicated to building the demographic base of the conservative movement.

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"One Land for Two Peoples"

Is it a solution to the Arab/Israeli conflict or a recipe for disaster?

For decades, the declared thrust of the Palestinians has been their desire of having their own state – in Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") and in the Gaza Strip. Now, a new idea has taken hold and is propagated in national media: a binational state, encompassing those territories and "Israel proper." The slogan is "One Land for Two Peoples."

What are the facts?

Review of history: The Arabs have launched four major wars against Israel, at the end of which Israel remained in possession of all the lands west of the Jordan River, the undivided city of Jerusalem, the vast Sinai, the Golan Heights and the Gaza Strip. In what was in all likelihood a major act of folly, but in order to attain peace with Egypt, Israel returned the Sinai to Egypt. But the peace with Egypt is the coldest imaginable.

Thus, having been unable to defeat Israel in war and unable to wear it down by their "intifadas," the Arabs had to think up something new in order to destroy Israel. And they did indeed come up with something. According to Yasser Arafat, the most important weapon of the Arabs is the "Arab womb," the motto being: "If we can't defeat them in war, let's outbreed them." And that is exactly what would happen if there ever were a "binational" state. There can be little doubt that, within a generation or less, the Arabs would have outbred their Jewish fellow citizens and would have become the majority in the country. They would thus have accomplished what they were unable to attain by any other means, namely the destruction of the Jewish state.

> "The Palestinians, just as the over one million Arabs now living in Israel with full rights as citizens, could be part of Israel, with full autonomy and with their own internal governance..."

Artificial countries: With the exception of Egypt, all the countries of the Middle East are artificial creations. After World War I, England and France carved up the Ottoman Empire, with England retaining what are now Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Israel and Iraq, and France being in possession of what are now Syria and Lebanon.

In 1917, the Balfour Declaration, proclaimed by the British mandatory power, established all of Palestine – east and west of the Jordan River – as the reconstituted homeland for the Jewish people. This was ratified by the 52 countries of the League of Nations. Insistence that these are Arab lands and that the Jews are "occupiers" is a notion that has been repeated so often and for so long that most of the world has come to believe it. But it has no basis in fact at all. It is a myth.

If Israel were ever to consent to the creation of a binational state, how would it work out? To get the answer, one only needs to go next door to Lebanon. In order to provide a safe haven for the Maronite Christians, the French carved out the artificial state of Lebanon. Within just one generation, the population ratio had begun to change in favor of the Moslems. Strife broke out, which ultimately culminated in a bloody civil war that lasted for close to ten years and in which scores of thousands died. Can anybody really believe that, given the mortal hatred of the Moslems against the Jews, things would be any different in Israel/Palestine? Of course not! A bloody civil war would be the inevitable result.

Created as a Jewish state: Israel was created as a Jewish state by the will of the nations of the world and by the brain and brawn of the Jewish people. There is no reason why the Israelis would turn their country over to those who are their declared mortal enemies. Do the Turks plan to establish a binational state with the Kurds (or do the Iranians or Iraqis, for that matter)? Do the Spaniards consider a binational state with the Basques? Do the Chinese propose the formation of a binational state with the Tibetans? Of course not. Why, therefore, should Israel even consider sharing its country with those whose never-changing agenda is its destruction? Why should Israel, one of the most advanced countries in the world in virtually every field of endeavor, make itself hostage to those who live in backwardness and ignorance and who are guided by religious fanaticism? Israel was founded to be the Jewish homeland and it will never acquiesce to its own destruction by allowing itself to become a binational state.

A binational state is a non-starter and, realistically, a Palestinian state in any portion of Judea/Samaria and Gaza (even in the unlikely case that the Israelis were ever willing to concede it) would not be viable. What then is the possible solution to this enduring problem? The Palestinians, just as the over one million Arabs now living in Israel with full rights as citizens, could be part of Israel, with full autonomy and with their own internal governance (something that the Kurds would give anything to attain). If they were unhappy with that solution they would be at liberty to migrate to any of the over twenty Arab countries that, one would hope, would welcome them with open arms.

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9 percent among Hispanics. In crucial swing states, where conservative 527s waged vigorous campaigns on behalf of the GOP, the president fared better still.

In Ohio, Bush attracted 16 percent of the black vote, up from 9 percent in 2000. That increase represented, according to *Congress Daily*'s Keith Koffler, ". . . a potentially devastating amount for Kerry. Extrapolating from the exit poll, this would amount to about 50,000 new votes for Bush. If these had gone to Kerry, Bush's 136,000 vote Ohio victory margin would have looked more like 36,000, and we would all be watching Court TV to see who won the election."

In 2000, Bush's meager 7 percent vote share among black Floridians nearly cost him the presidency. He bettered that in 2004, polling 13 percent against John Kerry. The president's performance among Latino Floridians also improved, from 49 percent to 56 percent. The GOP's improved showing among these two groups accounted for roughly 240,000 of the 381,000 votes by which the president carried Florida—63 percent of his total margin.

In New Mexico, one of two blue states that switched to red this year, Hispanics constitute 42 percent of the population, and 25 percent of the electorate. Bush's vote share among New Mexico Hispanics improved from 32 percent in 2000 to 44 percent in 2004. This generated a net Republican gain of 23,000 votes—far more than the 8,000 by which the president carried the state. In Colorado and Nevada, the president's Hispanic vote share increased by 5 and 6 points respectively, thwarting Kerry's best chances for a red-state takeover in the West.

I had a hand in designing the minority broadcast programs that helped generate these shifts—first as political director of the Republican Leadership Coalition, and later as president of America's PAC. My first principle was: Ignore Republican consultants! In 2000, the GOP had woefully mismanaged its appeals to black and Hispanic voters. George W. Bush was the most minority-friendly candidate Republicans had nominated since Abraham Lincoln. He had showcased his concern for minority problems throughout his governorship, both by the appointments he had made and the policies he'd pursued. And he had won unusually high vote shares among black and Hispanic Texans.

But in 2000, none of that history was communicated through the media that mattered. Democratic ads on minority stations accused Bush and the Republicans of intimidating minority voters, of promoting hate crimes, and of incarcerating minority youth en masse. GOP consultants seemed frozen in place. Unwilling to expend the emotional or financial capital to counterattack in the relevant venues, Republicans neither refuted racially charged allegations nor promoted a positive conservative agenda.

The gap between minority patterns of thinking and voting mattered not a whit unless conservatives mustered the will to politicize it.

By absenting ourselves from minority media, we Republicans gave the Democrats carte blanche to paint us as they chose. And they chose to paint us as bigots. In 2002, pollster Kellyanne Conway measured the consequences. Black voters did not associate the GOP with any of its traditional issues: "Republican" meant bigotry, plain and simple.

Adding irony to angst, GOP platform issues polled well with minorities. Millions of blacks supported traditional marriage and school choice. Millions of Hispanics were pro-life and anti-tax. In fact, there was hardly an issue in the Republican arsenal that did not receive higher approval from minorities than the party itself did. But this gap between minority patterns of thinking and voting mattered not a whit unless conservatives mustered the will to politicize it. I resolved to present the whole Republican platform to minority audiences in minority venues. Our 527s would attack the Democrats as aggressively as theirs attacked us. If I paid scant attention to what Republicans said, I paid respectful heed to what Democrats did. Their entire coalition courted minorities, appealing to them across a full range of issues by dramatizing a broad left-wing worldview.

This year, 527s running GOP issue ads presented a comparable conservative worldview, in the same minority-media venues. We campaigned on social issues. The Republican 527s ran ads criticizing the Democrats for promoting gay rights instead of traditional marriage. They savaged Democrats for promoting abortion, which kills 400,000 black babies each year, and which two-thirds of Hispanics oppose.

"You mustn't run these ads," we were told. "Minorities are not moral sexually."

We trumpeted tax issues. Our ads praised the president's family-friendly tax cuts, and assaulted the Democrats for opposing them.

"Minorities want government programs, not tax cuts," our consultant friends told us.

We highlighted investor issues. Herman Cain of America's PAC explained how the current Social Security system discriminates against African Americans demographically, and how private accounts could help minorities accumulate capital for retirement.

"Minorities don't have financial assets," we were told.

We addressed national security. Why, our commercials asked, were Democrats attacking the millions of African-American and Hispanic servicemen who protected our nation from cold-blooded savages committed to killing us?

"Blacks and Hispanics hate the war," intoned the consultants.

We aggressively championed school choice, excoriating black Democratic leaders for practicing it themselves while denying their peers the same option.

"Vouchers are no longer popular among minorities," the pollsters advised.

Early polling presaged our Election Day success. The Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies surveyed 850 African Americans between September 15 and October 10, 2004. Its report, "Politics and the 2004 Election," summarized a conservative shift in black politics. From October 2000 to October 2004, the percentage of African Americans who self-identified as Republicans increased from 4 percent to 10 percent. The percentage of blacks with household incomes of $60,000 or greater who supported Bush increased from 7.7 percent to 22.4 percent. The percentage of self-described black Christian conservatives planning to vote for Bush rose from 11 percent to 36 percent.

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THE GOOD NEWS ABOUT PAIN TREATMENT:

The Drug Enforcement Administration recently posted new guidelines on the DEA website to stop the unjustified harassment and prosecution of pain doctors.

THE BAD NEWS ABOUT PAIN TREATMENT:

Two months later the DEA deleted the guidelines, citing unspecified "misstatements."

No one knows why the DEA suddenly withdrew its own rules -- the Agency isn't talking. But it may have been the fact that the guidelines protected doctors from prosecution if they unwittingly prescribed opiates to addicts who deceived them. The government is currently prosecuting several physicians for exactly that conduct.

Over 30 million Americans suffer from chronic pain. A great many may need double or triple the normal amount of medication -- and they are almost always under-treated. These people could legitimately get relief with opioid drugs but they can't find doctors willing to prescribe enough to kill the pain. Taking opioids for pain relief rarely leads to addiction but physicians fear that prescribing large doses will attract the attention of over zealous federal agents, a risk that includes lengthy prison terms. So victims of severe accidents, failed surgery, terminal cancer, and the like are often left to writhe in agony.

Over the last two years the DEA tried to address this crisis, working with medical specialists from the University of Wisconsin's Pain and Policy Studies Group. They set guidelines that would both instruct and safeguard physicians, allowing them to prescribe adequate levels of pain medication without fear of harassment.

These guidelines or something like them should be reinstated so that no one has to suffer needlessly.

Common Sense for Drug Policy
www.CommonSenseDrugPolicy.org www.DrugWarFacts.org
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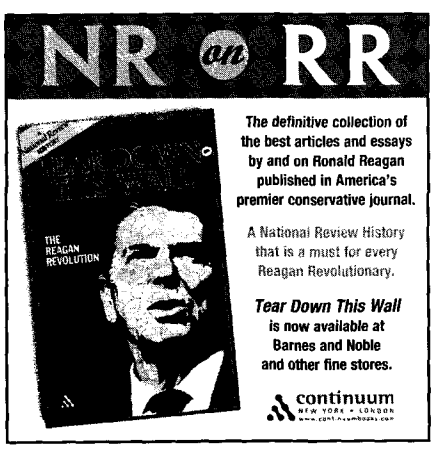
To laborers in this vineyard, these changes were dramatic—but understandable. Among non-black, non-Hispanic demographic subgroups, higher levels of religious observance correlated with higher levels of Republican allegiance. And why not? It was Republicans, not Democrats, who promoted the role of religion in the public square. Among non-black, non-Hispanic demographic subgroups, rising income correlated with higher levels of Republican allegiance. And why not? It was the Republicans, not the Democrats, who resisted tax progressivity, and who sheltered income for savings and investment.

The theory of minority exceptionalism posited that the historical experience of minorities was dramatically removed from the mainstream—so much so that even as they assimilated into normative trends of income, residency, occupation, and religiosity, their political behavior would remain apart, responding to culture rather than class. And as late as 2000, that theory seemed credible, at least to GOP consultants.

But in 2004, "minority exceptionalism" crumpled under the concerted assault of conservative 527s. The election proved that if Republicans communicated mainstream conservative views in black and Hispanic media venues, they could win substantial victories against liberal dominance in these communities.

If the Republican party is courageous enough to follow through on the seminal work of these fellow-traveling 527s, it can reclaim its natural constituents across racial and ethnic divides. So constituted, the conservative coalition of 2004 can do more than win. It can govern—boldly. **NR**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■ **THE MIDDLE EAST II**

Remember Algeria

A lesson from midcentury

ALISTAIR HORNE

On the night of All Saints, 1954, a young honeymooning couple of French schoolteachers, dedicated to their work among underprivileged children, were dragged off a bus in the Aurès Mountains of Algeria and shot dead. Their murder by the newly created FLN (National Liberation Front) marked the beginning of organized revolt against the French colonial "occupiers." The eight-year-long Algerian war was to bring down six French prime ministers, open the door to Charles de Gaulle—and come close to destroying him too.

The war was the last of the grand-style colonial struggles, but, perhaps more to the point, it was also the first campaign in which poorly equipped Muslim mujahadeen licked one of the top Western armies. The echoes of *la guerre d'Algérie* still reverberate across the Islamic world, especially in Iraq.

As in Iraq today, the struggle in Algeria was hydra-headed. In fact, there were several wars going on at the same time: the counter-insurgency; a civil war between Algerians; the external battle fought for public opinion in metropolitan France, and on the platforms of the U.N.; the struggle between the *pieds noirs* (French colonists in North Africa) and Paris, culminating in army revolt, followed by open, white terrorism under the aegis of the brutal killers of the OAS (Organisation Armée Secrète).

The first year of the Algerian war ended in stalemate, with France's forces, trained for war in Europe, unable to eradicate the FLN, and the FLN too weak to inflict serious damage on the French. Then, in a deadly move, the FLN switched to attacking the government's Algerian auxiliaries: local *caids* or magistrates, administrators, and above all, the police and their families. This strategy paid off handsomely. The Muslim police suffered many casualties; they were demoralized by fear, and remained paralyzed in their stations. They had to be protected by French army units that should have been deployed on offensive missions.

Next the FLN targeted villages friendly to the French, and outlying *pied noir* settlements. Using the bestial technique favored by Islamists to express contempt for the infidel, they slit the throats of women and children. Result: On the one hand, the French steadily lost support to the FLN for failing to protect the loyal, or uncommitted population; on the other, a terrorized civilian workforce left in droves.

Premier Guy Mollet sent in French conscripts. Even against 500,000 troops, the FLN continued to prove elusive—but the conscripts brought back to France ugly stories of torture. These were snapped up by anti-war celebs like the Sartres, and journals like Servan-Schreiber's *L'Express*. In 1958 General Massu's tough Paras broke the FLN hold on Algiers—through widespread use of torture. They won the Battle of Algiers; but they were to lose the war through the revulsion of French and foreign public opinion.

It got worse. In 1961, the army in Algeria revolted. The revolt was led by the elite Paras under four dissident generals. In response General de Gaulle made one of his most impassioned speeches, heard by conscripts all over Algeria. The revolt collapsed; but the unreliability of the army now made it plain that France would have to negotiate an exit strategy from her proudest colony—once an integral part of France.

The end came in 1962 when de Gaulle surrendered unconditionally to the insurgents. All French oil assets in the Sahara went, and one million *pieds noirs*, families who had lived in Algeria for three generations, fled to France. An estimated one (out of ten) million Muslim Algerians had died, most killed by their own people.

Alistair Horne is the author of *A Savage War of Peace: Algeria, 1954-1962*. This article originally appeared in *The Spectator*.

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A huge price had been paid but, as de Gaulle put it, France was now free, "to marry her age," and she prospered. Independent Algeria, rich in oil reserves, should have prospered too. Instead—a typical Muslim failed state—she stagnated under one-party control (the old warlords of the FLN), rampant corruption, and abysmal inefficiency.

In the late 1980s a new revolt broke out, this time led by the fundamentalist FIS (Islamic Salvation Front). Many of its leaders were the kind of young Algerians who joined the struggle against the French occupiers in the 1950s. Their grievances were similar: unemployment and overpopulation, and no say in politics. Elections were cancelled, and the FIS disfranchised. It took to the hills and the streets in much the same way as the FLN had in 1954. As in 1954, the principal victims were local policemen and regional administrators. An appalling civil war ensued, with the Algiers government proving as incapable of crushing the revolt as the French army had been in 1954-62.

The FIS was in turn thrust aside by a far more extreme and ruthless band of revolutionaries, the GIA (Armed Islamic Group). Its aim seemed to be a complete destruction of the existing order. Some of its killers had served with the Taliban in Afghanistan. The economy was targeted, and so at one point were foreigners: Businessmen and journalists were massacred with the intent of driving out foreign capital. Even nuns were murdered, and fundamentalists threw acid in the faces of female students who refused the veil. Whole villages—including women and children—were slaughtered by unknown guerrillas, for unknown motives. In Algiers huge car bombs killed far more civilians than the combined terrorist acts had in the war against the French.

Beheading of victims became common, their heads stuck on road signs as a kind of gruesome sport. Algerians themselves spoke of the "blind war," but in its prolonged, random senselessness it came almost more to resemble Europe's Thirty Years War of the 17th century.

By the end of 2001, between 100,000 and 150,000 Algerians had died in the civil war, as well as 120 foreigners. The cost to the economy ran into billions of dollars. And all this in spite of a tough, 120,000-strong army backed by 80,000 police.

Following 9/11, intelligence indicated numerous links between al-Qaeda and Algeria. It began to look as though the roots of jihad could be traced back to the war in Algeria that began 50 years ago.

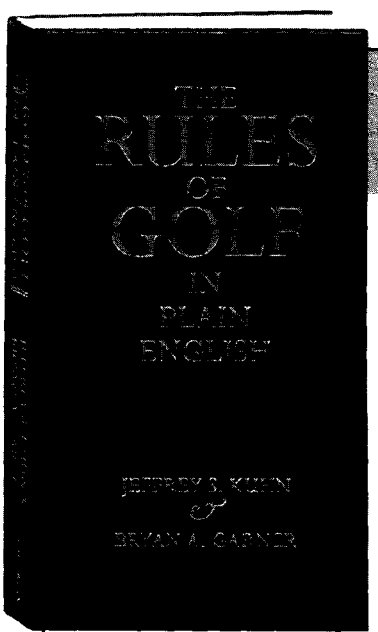
De Gaulle greets Muslims in Algeria, 1960

HULTON ARCHIVE

In late October in Iraq, for instance, on top of stepped-up killings of Iraqi police, we had the appalling massacre of 49 unarmed army recruits. (How could they have been left unprotected? It all points to the gross underdeployment of the U.S. army, which has only 130,000 men as opposed to the 500,000 Guy Mollet had—and Colin Powell wanted.) This is just the kind of ruthless ferocity displayed during the Algerian war and its aftermath.

In many ways the horrors suffered in Algeria over the past 50 years read like a paradigm, a microcosm of Islam's frustrated inability to meet the challenges of the modern world, which leads it to lash out against the rich, successful West. In the context of Iraq, Algeria's "war of liberation" acquires a new, sharper relevance.

If there is one glimmer of hope, it is that with the Americans' having established a (very discreet) footprint in Algeria to help the Bouteflika regime combat terrorism, there does seem to have been a marked fall in the level of the atrocities there over the past three years. One small success for Bush's War on Terror? Or have all the Algerian killers just moved to Baghdad? **NR**



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■ PUBLIC POLICY

The Perils of Tax Reform

Frankly, tiny and timid is better than big and bold

RAMESH PONNURU

WHEN President Bush said that he would appoint a commission to report on tax reform in the spring, conservative hopes for a fundamental overhaul rose. Could this finally be the moment for a flat tax or a national sales tax? The answer appears to be no. Early reports suggest that the commission will look at substantial tax-policy changes, but will not scrap the code and start over.

Conservatives should be relieved, not upset. Anyone who has filed a tax return knows that there are good reasons for reform. But there are also abundant reasons for caution. Conservative enthusiasts for reform have underestimated the political risks involved. The Bush administration has acted wisely in the three tax-reform decisions it has so far made: rejecting a comprehensive, big-bang tax reform; disavowing the idea of abolishing tax preferences for homeownership and charitable giving; and placing tax reform behind Social Security on the legislative calendar. It may find itself having to lower tax-reform expectations still further in coming months.

The perils of tax reform may be judged from what happened the last two times it was on the agenda in Washington: in 1986, and then again in 1995-96. In the former year, Congress took massive strides toward simplifying the tax code. Many tax deductions were eliminated. The broadened tax base made it possible to bring down tax rates. It was a great bipartisan victory. It was also a major setback for conservatives.

Congress adopted the liberal definition of tax reform, and broadened the tax base to include things it should not have included. The treatment of saving and investment was the chief problem. Taxing income when it is made, and then also taxing the returns on any of that income, creates a bias against saving. IRAs, by shielding some of that investment income from taxation, reduce that bias. Liberal tax reformers, however, regarded IRAs as tax breaks. The 1986 reform accordingly scaled them back. It raised capital-gains taxes, too, on the related theory that low taxes on capital gains are also a nefarious tax break. And it raised taxes on business investment. For most of the subsequent two decades, conservatives have been trying to undo the policy damage wrought by those changes. By retarding the growth of the investor class, the 1986 tax reform delayed conservatism's political ascent.

When Republicans took control of Congress in 1995, they were eager to reform the tax code again, but this time on conservative terms. Many conservatives—notably Dick Armey, Steve Forbes, and Jack Kemp—supported a flat tax. The flat tax would end the bias against saving by not taxing the returns on it. In effect, it would be a tax on consumption. People in almost all income classes would be taxed at the same rate (17 percent in most plans). There would be no deductions: not for mortgage interest, not for charitable giving, not for anything. The goal was to keep the tax code, as much as possible, from influencing people's economic decisions.

A minority of conservatives, including Bill Archer, then the chairman of the House committee on taxes, wanted even more: an end to the hated IRS. Their preferred solution was a 23 percent national retail-sales tax. Like the flat tax, the sales tax would have applied a single tax rate to all taxpayers and would have ended the bias against saving. The crucial difference was administrative: A sales tax would relieve most people of the need to have any contact with the tax collector.

The guiding assumption among conservatives seemed to be that once their economists had agreed on an ideal tax plan, it would be Congress's job to pass it. But Congress did not seem eager to play this role. Nobody ever came up with a practical strategy for getting comprehensive tax reform enacted in either its flat-tax or sales-tax variety. Newt Gingrich appointed a tax-reform commission that produced an excellent analysis of the benefits that would flow from adoption of a flat tax. Nothing came of it. Congress never even voted on a flat-tax bill.

FIVE EASY PIECES

Years of getting nowhere taught conservatives the virtues of incrementalism. After George W. Bush took office, Grover Norquist, head of the tax-cutting group Americans for Tax Reform, argued that conservatives should drop the idea of legislating a flat tax all at once. Instead, he advocated five discrete steps toward the flat-tax goal: abolishing the estate tax, the capital-gains tax, and the Alternative Minimum Tax; enacting universal IRAs to shelter most saving from double taxation; and allowing businesses to deduct the full cost of their investments as soon as they make them. Supply-siders, adapting a phrase of Ernest Christian, a Republican tax lawyer in Washington, quickly dubbed the strategy "five easy pieces."

Norquist's approach is still basically correct. Conservatives have

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more power in Washington than they did in 1995—but they still don't have nearly enough to enact comprehensive tax reform, and trying would endanger what power they do have.

Consider the practical problems that would attend the creation of a national sales tax. Its proponents do not want the federal government to levy a sales tax in addition to an income tax. Many of them say that they would abolish the income tax and repeal the Sixteenth Amendment so that it would stay abolished. Good luck with that.

The sales taxers also lowball the tax rate they would have to impose. They say that 23 percent would be sufficient to fund the federal government. But this number is misleading. They would put a $30 tax on a $100 purchase. They say that is a "23 percent" tax because 30 is 23 percent of 130. Normally, we would say that was a 30 percent sales tax. Since a retail-sales tax that high would cause a lot of people to buy wholesale or resort to other forms of tax avoidance and evasion, the rate might have to go even higher. Or the government might have to convert the tax into a Value Added Tax levied at each stage of production.

According to its supporters, the sales tax would shackle the federal Leviathan. Every time you bought a pack of gum, you would supposedly remember how much you hate out-of-control federal spending. I very much doubt it would work this way. Most of us have a better sense of how much we paid in income or property taxes last year than of how much we paid in sales taxes. My guess is that a sales tax would prove easier to raise than an income tax. A VAT, which would be largely hidden from the people who ultimately pay it, would be even easier to raise—a veritable money machine for governments, as European nations have demonstrated.

A national sales tax is unthinkable. A flat tax is merely impossible. To replace our progressive tax rates with a single rate, Congress would face three unpalatable options. It would have to raise taxes on low-income taxpayers. It would have to accept a massive increase in the deficit. Or it would have to assume that the flat tax will have so extraordinarily positive an effect on the economy that the average tax rate can drop without increasing the deficit. Any of these options would be a very hard sell for a majority of congressmen.

Almost every interest group in Washington would mobilize to defeat a tax reform that abolished tax deductions. On conservatives' side would be just a few think tanks. There are good reasons to think that the mortgage-interest deduction does not actually benefit homeowners. Try to convince most homeowners of that after the homebuilders are done with their ad campaign.

SPENDING POLITICAL CAPITAL WISELY

The case for moving cautiously does not rest solely on the difficulty of enacting fundamental tax reform. It is also worth considering that other uses of political capital have a higher ratio of reward to risk. The votes may already be there for repealing the estate tax, or greatly expanding tax-sheltered savings accounts. Adding private accounts to Social Security would be an uphill climb, but would also move millions of voters into the free-market camp. By increasing the number of investors, increasing the extent of their involvement in capital markets, and making the Republican party appealing to them, these policies would make it easier to enact other conservative reforms in the future. Abolishing deductions, on the other hand, would consume enormous amounts of political capital without bringing us any closer to future policy victories. In this respect, it would resemble the 1986 tax reform.

Bush has dodged a bullet by rejecting fundamental tax reform. Still, he wants—as one of his aides says—to propose something "big and bold." Looking at the policies under contemplation, however, I cannot help but think that tiny and timid might serve the president better.

The administration wants to get rid of, or at least reduce, the Alternative Minimum Tax. This tax was introduced to make sure that everyone paid taxes, no matter how many tax loopholes they had found. If the regular tax code generates too low a tax liability for someone, he has to pay the AMT instead. Though originally intended to snare rich people, the AMT catches more and more middle-class families in its net each year. (One reason it does is that it is not indexed for inflation.) The AMT does not allow most of the deductions and exemptions that the regular tax code does, and is consequently very punishing to savers and large families.

But the AMT also raises a lot of money for the federal government. In a few years, it is projected to collect more money than

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the regular income tax. So the officials who are thinking about getting rid of it are looking to replace the lost revenue by abolishing two of the largest tax breaks too—and that's where the trouble comes in.

One of those breaks is the tax-free status of employer-provided health care. That status has done a lot to create America's health-care troubles. It encourages workers to seek health coverage rather than higher wages. It inflates health-care costs, since people aren't paying for them directly. And it means that Americans' health coverage is tied more closely to their jobs than is, well, healthy. But people are not going to understand any of this if the administration proposes a more rational tax treatment of health care; they will think that Bush is trying to make it harder for people to get health care. The unions will fight ferociously to maintain a tax subsidy for the benefits they have negotiated. Bush has already started to limit some of the negative effects of this tax break by creating Health Savings Accounts, which extend another tax break to individuals who pay out-of-pocket for health expenses. That policy levels the playing field between individual payment of health costs and employer-provided insurance. It may not be as efficient an arrangement as a tax policy that did not favor health spending at all. It may, however, be the best that we can practically do.

The other big tax benefit on the chopping block is the deduction for state and local taxes. As with the health tax break, it probably should never have been created. Why should people in low-tax states effectively subsidize people in high-tax ones? Why should the federal government make it easier for states to maintain high tax rates? If this deduction were abolished, state politics would probably shift rightward as states' voters paid more of the price for electing tax-and-spenders. But getting rid of the deduction will obviously be very unpopular in high-tax states. When the tax reformers of 1986 briefly discussed it, they were quickly shouted down. The one thing reformers have going for them this time is that the AMT tends to hit the same states the hardest, making a trade possible. If it isn't, Bush may have to settle for taking many people off the AMT rolls.

Bush and Congress could do a lot of good on taxes without running these risks. Expanding tax-sheltered savings accounts would be very popular with investors. The mortgage-interest deduction could be converted to a tax credit, which would reduce its value only for the most affluent taxpayers. Tax credits for poor people could be consolidated and perhaps expanded, simplifying the tax code and making it less hostile to families. Getting rid of the estate tax would boost capital formation and shred as much as 10 percent of the tax code. The result would be something like the 1986 reform, except with more favorable treatment for saving and a higher top tax rate.

Bush is right to put tax reform of any kind behind Social Security reform on his to-do list. A free-market reform of Social Security would be a kind of tax reform: It could be seen as a payroll tax cut for workers made conditional on their investing the proceeds. The cost of delaying Social Security reform would be high, as would the rewards of starting private accounts now. (The longer workers get to compound their interest, the better.) The political opportunities Social Security presents are, as mentioned before, also greater than those that tax reform does. Conservatives may be inclined to be "big and bold" on tax reform, but they should above all else be smart and sober about it. **NR**

■ **AT WAR**

Three Years and Counting

The U.S. has not suffered a major attack since September 2001. Why?

ANDREW C. McCARTHY

THE September 11 attacks still reverberate profoundly. Of that, there is no better indication than George W. Bush's decisive reelection. For all the trendy talk about "values voters," the campaign was run principally on national-security issues, and the president won a surprisingly large majority. The nation was convinced that he had a superior handle on how to keep us safe.

And there's a reason for that conviction: In the three years since 9/11 and the still-unsolved anthrax scare that followed hard on it, the U.S. has not suffered a domestic terrorist attack. One might ask: Is that truly attributable to President Bush's stewardship? After all, we are continually told that Islamist militants are gifted with preternatural reservoirs of patience; could it not be that we are simply in another cyclical downturn, a calm before the next inevitable storm?

Not a chance. The failure of al-Qaeda, its affiliates, and assorted Wahhabi wannabes to strike us when we have every indication they are desperately trying to is a direct result of the Bush doctrine, announced and implemented in the aftermath of 9/11. The president, the Pentagon, and the Justice Department are to be commended for persevering in it despite a relentless barrage of criticism from the media, civil-liberties extremists, and, regrettably, too many Democrats. Especially salient on this score have been two aspects of the doctrine: a comprehensive strategy that brings to bear all of government's arsenal, and the admonition to state sponsors that they will be considered just as culpable, and will be treated with the same lethality, as the terrorists they abet. Most of all, however, success has been the result of getting serious.

The holistic approach to terrorism has a number of advantages so palpable that the more interesting question is why it took a cataclysm of 9/11 dimensions to get it implemented. Most obviously, our military has killed or captured thousands of militants overseas. Incapacitated terrorists don't commit attacks. This is not a trite observation. First, unlike sovereigns, sub-state terror groups have extremely limited resources. To be sure, lost terrorists can be replaced in numerical terms—and *are* being replaced owing to

Mr. McCarthy, who led the prosecution of Sheik Omar Abdel Rahman and eleven others in connection with the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, is a senior fellow at the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, and a contributor to National Review Online.

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prodigious funding streams globally backing madrassas that churn out an alarming number of terrorists-in-waiting. But instantly replacing the deadly competence of experienced hands is impossible. Second, the pantheon of jihadists who have become household names over the last few years—bin Laden, Zarqawi, Zawahiri, Khalid Sheik Mohammed, Sheik Omar Abdel Rahman (the blind sheik), Ramzi Yousef, and others—do not strike once and retire. Motivated by hatred and depravity masquerading as spirituality, they are even more likely to be recidivists than ordinary criminals. Neutralizing them does not prevent just one atrocity—it nullifies many.

On par with targeting the sheer number of terrorists has been addressing their motivation. Prosecution in the criminal-justice system was virtually the exclusive American response to terrorism from the time of the infamous "Black Hawk Down" debacle in Somalia in early 1993—after which the U.S. became resolutely casualty-averse—through October 2001, when President Bush dispatched the military to crush al-Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan. The result? Although the nation was attacked repeatedly in that eight-year interim, fewer than three dozen terrorists were convicted in federal court—and those at a cost of unknown millions. Eliminating such a piddling fraction of a committed enemy at a time when its ranks were swelling into the tens of thousands was a sure prescription to be hit repeatedly. Nothing galvanizes an opposition, nothing spurs its recruiting, like the killer combination of successful attacks and a conceit that the adversary is pusillanimous. For zealots willing to immolate themselves in suicide-bombing and hijacking operations, mere prosecution is a provocatively weak response.

Similarly, appeasement is an invitation to more barbarity. Yet, as Norman Podhoretz detailed in an important essay ("World War IV") in the September issue of *Commentary*, it was a consistent element of U.S. counterterrorism policy in the quarter-century before 9/11. Indeed, the Reagan administration's disastrous pullout from Lebanon in 1983 after a barracks bombing by Hezbollah killed nearly 250 Marines is still a standard talking point for bin Laden and other jihadists—who bray to recruits that Americans give in when the body count gets high enough.

President Bush has now bulldozed that image. By making clear that his intention is not merely to contain but to eradicate international terror networks that threaten the U.S.; by indicating that terrorism is essentially a military challenge, as to which law enforcement plays an important but decidedly subordinate role; and by following through with formidable force in Afghanistan and Iraq, he has not merely decimated the enemy's numbers and its capacity to project power. He has also dramatically altered the enemy's perception of America as a nation to be trifled, rather than reckoned, with. Even those who despise us were guaranteed to become more tepid once it was certain that a swift and devastating response would be the price of a strike.

This assurance has had an underappreciated effect on state sponsors. Yes, al-Qaeda is a serious enemy . . . for a terrorist organization. But it is not a nation. It has no navy, it has no air force, and it has (at least we currently believe) neither ballistic missiles capable of striking the U.S. nor the types of payloads that can make such weapons an existential threat. To be a credible enemy, even the most professional terrorist network needs help from sovereign powers. Without such help, mounting an attack—while far from impossible—becomes much more difficult. The U.S., once again, becomes a tough target because of the natural advantages of geography and resources that made us a world power in the 19th century, before the age of air forces, submarines, and ICBMs seemed to make those advantages passé.

STRIKING THE ROGUE STATES

It has been popular in the past ten years or so for theorists to wax eloquent about a post-sovereign world in which the major threats come from sub-national entities. But this view dramatically underestimates the key role still played, and advantages still enjoyed, by modern states. Only countries have borders that are protected from attack by international law; have personnel that operate in other countries—even unfriendly countries—under the cover of diplomatic immunity; have the capacity to collect and disseminate sensitive intelligence (among other things) with impunity via diplomatic pouch; have the authority to issue travel documents that facilitate international movement; have the ability to tax people to support their agendas; and have military entities privileged to conduct training and weapons production (and, as we've seen in

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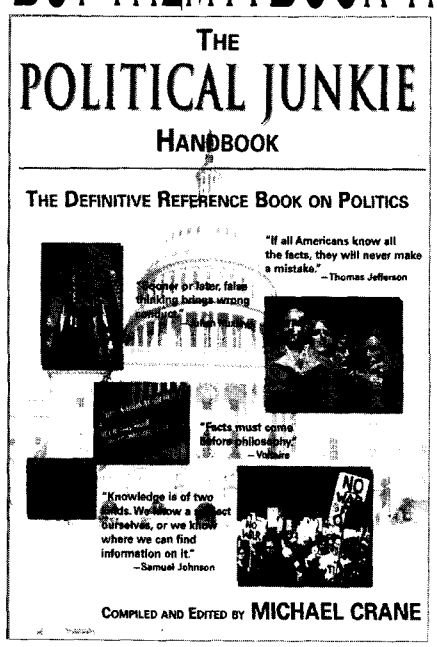
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Iran, North Korea, Pakistan, Libya, and elsewhere, able as a practical matter to develop weapons of mass destruction).

At its most potent, al-Qaeda basked in state support. Sudan, Afghanistan, and, later, Iran gave it safe haven for command and control, training, and recruitment; and, as Clinton counterterrorism coordinator Richard Clarke asserted in the late 1990s, Iraq also offered bin Laden a soft place to land. The war we are currently fighting should have begun after our East African embassies were attacked in August 1998, and certainly no later than the USS *Cole* bombing in October 2000. But President Clinton declined to apply his considerable skills to unwinding al-Qaeda's sovereign safety net, which included not only its Taliban hosts but their allies in Pakistan (which freely allowed its borders to be crossed for terrorist recruitment and training purposes, and whose intelligence service was compromised in bin Laden's cause). Al-Qaeda enjoyed a steady influx of precious funding that would have been impossible without countenance, if not outright complicity, on the part of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and other bastions of Sunni dominance. Bin Laden, moreover, received weapons-development assistance from Iraq, as well as from Iran and Syria through Hezbollah.

None of this was a mystery to U.S. intelligence. Indeed, some of it was publicly charged in indictments filed against various terrorists. The Clinton administration, however, subordinated these concerns to other priorities—the desire to be seen as an honest broker rather than an Israeli ally in the so-called "peace process," the elevation of challenging Pakistan on nuclear proliferation over cultivating it on counterterrorism, the fear of creating instability and resentment in the Muslim world, etc. The Bush doctrine has changed all that. This doesn't mean the problems the Clinton administration grappled with were not real ones; they clearly were. Now, though, other nations are on notice that the U.S. regards ending state support of terror networks that threaten America as its most urgent policy imperative, and that we are willing to risk setbacks in other areas to promote national security.

The effect has been startling. Nations that once coddled al-Qaeda are now American allies, or at least feel the need to demonstrate concretely that they have ceased to support bin Laden. Without such support, al-Qaeda is a shell of its former self, and the remnants of its upper echelon have to spend their waking hours on how to survive until tomorrow, rather than on scripting tomorrow's attack. The nature of bin Laden's organization has thus undergone a radical change. It is still a threat, but an atomized one. There are cells throughout the world, but the command structure is decimated, and the cells—staffed with less experienced recruits—are not as capable as the halcyon al-Qaeda of the late 1990s.

This development plays strongly to our advantage: Cells operate best when they can blend into the community at large, and it is therefore not surprising that bin Laden's greatest achievements prior to 9/11 occurred in places like Mogadishu, Nairobi, Dar es Salaam, and Aden—Islamic cities with pockets of ardent militant sympathizers. Such places do not exist on the same scale inside the U.S. While 9/11 was a spectacular terrorist success, it has not altered the reality that it is not an easy proposition for a guerrilla faction without a navy or air force to attack American territory. The 1993 World Trade Center bombing took over a year to plan, and the laborious bomb-building (involving numerous meetings, other communications, renting safehouses, purchasing and transporting chemicals, etc.) took months. With law enforcement and public awareness now at unprecedented heights, it is an extreme challenge for militants in a vastly non-Muslim country to go undetected through the exertions required for a major attack.

That could all change if we lost our resolve. We are unlikely to, however, because of three developments. First, under the direction of attorney general John Ashcroft and FBI director Robert Mueller, the Justice Department and FBI have undergone a seismic culture shift. Their philosophy is now prevention first and prosecution second; they are more focused on stopping the next attack than on securing indictments after innocents have been slaughtered.

The other two changes have to do with the good and the bad of the Clinton years. As for the good, President Clinton and his Justice Department deserve enormous credit for revamping anti-terror law in 1996. Prior to that time, the bias in the federal penal code was toward prosecuting completed acts of mass murder. The 1996 legislation significantly modified the law, placing desperately needed emphasis on the preparatory phases—by, among other things, criminalizing the provision of material support to terrorism; geometrically increasing the penalties for conspiracies, attempts, and threats to commit terrorist acts; and making it far easier for the Treasury Department to choke funding channels. To the limited extent the post-9/11 Patriot Act affected these areas, it was merely to refine what was already in place.

Unfortunately, much of the good done on the prosecution side was undermined by the Clinton Justice Department on the investigative side, including, most perilously, the needless heightening of the so-called wall that prevented intelligence agents and criminal investigators from pooling information to—as the numbingly repeated phrase goes—"connect the dots." While it is very unlikely investigators could have prevented 9/11, with such an impediment in place they never really had a chance.

The Patriot Act's dismantling of the wall is a signal achievement, and the Justice Department rightly credits it with several convictions rung up on conspiracy and material-support charges in the last three years. These prosecutions, necessarily involving nascent plots and ambiguous threats, have occasionally been belittled as overkill in the mainstream press, which bizarrely compares them unfavorably with the sensational terror prosecutions of the 1990s. But, of course, those cases seemed weightier because they usually followed murderous terror attacks. If we are to continue to avoid attack, less flashy enforcement—focusing on preparatory crimes, money laundering, immigration violations, and the like—must be the wave of the future. The prevention-first philosophy also means maintaining other Patriot Act improvements that sensibly gave agents conducting intelligence investigations the same evidence-gathering tools long available to criminal investigators. These tools, many of which—like repeal of the wall—will sunset at the end of 2005 if not extended by Congress, have made it feasible to strangle domestic terror threats in the cradle.

Three-plus years without an attack is not itself insurance against future threats, but neither is it an accident. It is the direct result of a national-security strategy that takes the battle forcibly to the enemy overseas, strenuously discourages other countries from providing terror networks with urgently needed support, and, domestically, makes prevention and diligence paramount over post-attack prosecution. It is a stunning achievement. **NR**

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■ ESSAY

Our Crisis of Foundations

What Tom Wolfe's novel, among other things, brings to mind

JOHN DERBYSHIRE

My colleague Jonah Goldberg, speaking at a recent panel discussion in which we were both participating, remarked that modern democracy is sorely in need of a metaphysic. That put me in mind of one of Aldous Huxley's aphorisms. In his 1937 essay "Beliefs," Huxley said, "It is impossible to live without a metaphysic. The choice that is given us is not between some kind of metaphysic and no metaphysic; it is always between a good metaphysic and a bad metaphysic, a metaphysic that corresponds reasonably closely with observed and inferred reality and one that doesn't."

Why am I raising such ethereal matters? In recent days, I have read Tom Wolfe's new novel, *I Am Charlotte Simmons*. The novel, as you may have heard, deals with an innocent young girl from back-country North Carolina who wins a place at an elite university, where she—or at any rate, her innocence—is destroyed as swiftly, coldly, and thoroughly as a kitten that has wandered onto a busy six-lane expressway. In the last chapter of the novel, titled "The Ghost in the Machine," we see a Charlotte who has finally lost touch with her soul, thereby becoming a well-integrated member of the elite culture. She loves Big Brother . . . who in this particular story is a dimwitted college athlete.

This will not be a review of Wolfe's book (which I enjoyed, and recommend to readers with strong stomachs for cold-eyed observations of modern depravity). It is only that the fate of poor Charlotte, and Jonah's remark, and Huxley's apothegm, and the previous book I'd read, which was Roger Penrose's *The Road to Reality: A Complete Guide to the Laws of the Universe*, and a scientific encounter I shall describe in just a moment, all together fired off a train of thought that seemed worth recording.

Tom Wolfe has for some years been nursing an interest in matters metaphysical. Back in 1996 he wrote an article for *Forbes ASAP* with the title "Sorry, But Your Soul Just Died," centered around some conversations he had been having with young neuroscientists. There are loud echoes of that essay in *I Am Charlotte Simmons*.

Wolfe's preoccupations embrace three main areas of the human sciences, the first of them being studies of the social behavior of animals. The key name here is Edward O. Wilson, the Harvard biologist whom Wolfe refers to in that *Forbes* essay as "Darwin II." The fictional university Charlotte attends is, among other things, a place where dominant males—fraternity bluebloods and star athletes—browse freely on the sexual favors of nubile females, as in a chimp colony.

The second area is neuroscience. Charlotte herself takes a course in this subject, giving Wolfe the excuse to insert slabs of it into his novel. Our understanding of brain function has gone much further than most non-scientists realize. Nowhere in that understanding is there any trace of a notion of the conscious self. According to Wolfe, practically no working neuroscientist believes that such a thing exists. The "I" that is the first word of Wolfe's title may, science tells us, be an illusion; and the fate of his heroine suggests that this is indeed so.

The third area that interests Wolfe is genetics. As with brain function, our knowledge of genetics has progressed much further and faster than is commonly known. Indeed, some of the areas in which it is progressing very fast are those where brain function and genetics meet. Here is a random quote plucked from current scientific literature (in this case from the November 22, 2004, issue

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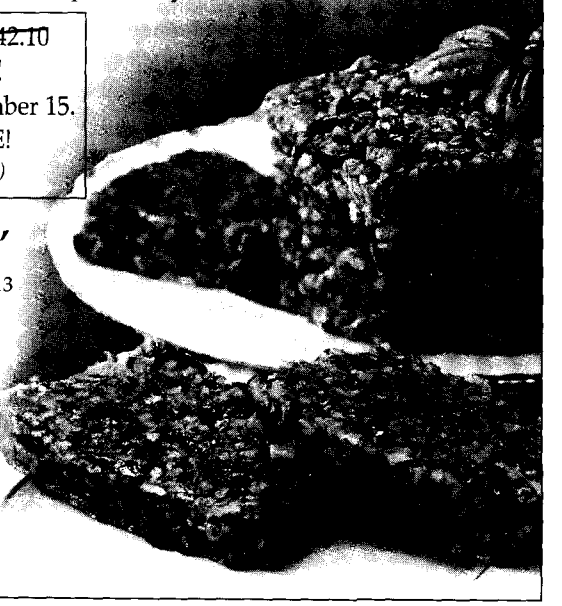

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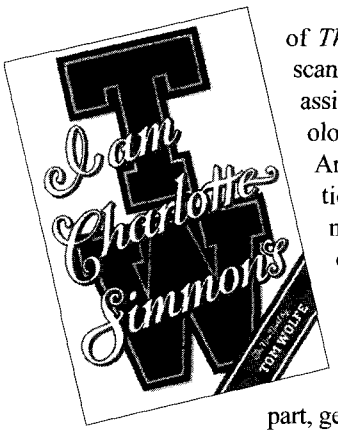

of *The Scientist*): "Using PET [a brain-scanning technology], Jon-Kar Zubieta, an assistant professor of psychiatry and radiology at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, and colleagues found that mutations in COMT [the gene encoding manufacture of an enzyme called catechol-O-methyltransferase] increase pain sensitivity by reducing the enzyme's ability to activate the μ-opioid system." Translation: The brain's response to pain is, at least in part, genetically determined.

So is a great deal else of the human personality. I recently had a visit from a researcher at a prestigious university. He and I had been exchanging e-mails on topics of common interest but had never actually met. This brilliant and engaging young man works in a field called computational genomics. He spends his time trawling through—"data mining"—the 3 billion units of the human genome, trying to figure out how it all works. Plenty has already been figured out, as he eagerly showed me, taking me through some academic websites on my home computer. Genes for human intelligence? "Sure, we have several nailed down, and more are showing up all the time. See here . . . and here . . ."

The self has yielded to the organism, morality to biology. This is the way the tide is running, fast and strong, in channels carved by science.

SECOND THOUGHTS

I have been interested in these aspects of the human sciences, in a dilettantish way—a Tom Wolfe-ish way—for twelve or fifteen years. At first I welcomed these new understandings in biology, neuroscience, and genetics. They seemed to me to reinforce the conservative view of human nature, and refute the liberal view. Yes, men and women are fundamentally and immutably different. Yes, human races exist, and differ in ways other than the physically obvious. No, the human personality is not infinitely malleable, cannot be molded to perfection by social engineers shuffling environmental variables around. Yes, religious belief is a source of health and strength, both personal and social. (From the point of view of Mother Nature, *sub specie Darwini* if you like, success is reproduction, and the only really philoprogenitive groups of humans are the religious ones.)

Lately, however, and particularly after reading *I Am Charlotte Simmons*, I have begun to worry about the darker side of these discoveries—about their dehumanizing, deconstructing effects. The neuroscience is especially troubling. The vulgar metaphysic we all carry round with us includes the vague idea of a self, an "I," imagined as a little homunculus crouched inside our heads an inch or so behind the eyes, observing and directing all that goes on in our lives. It seems probable that this is as false as the medieval notion of the sky's being a crystal sphere. Yet if the self is indeed an illusion, then what is to prevent that dissolution of all values foreseen by Nietzsche? In Charlotte Simmons's world, a world without the self, what is virtue? What is wisdom? What is responsibility?

We have already gone some way down that path. It is now taken for granted, for example, that homosexuality is a biological attribute of the human organism. "I was born this way!" the modern homosexual tells us, and science confirms that in most cases, if not exactly all, this is true. Yet just a few decades ago, well within the memory of middle-aged people, homosexuality was thought of not as a thing people *were*, but as something they *did*. You will hear people speak loosely of there having been laws against homosexuality in past times. There never were any such laws, nor could there have been. The laws were against homosexual *acts*, committed by autonomous selves who might freely choose to act otherwise. Here, in a largish area of life and jurisprudence, the self has yielded to the organism, morality to biology. And this is the way the tide is running, fast and strong, in channels carved by science. Wolfe: "We now live in an age in which science is a court from which there is no appeal."

The deconstruction of self is not a new thing, of course. It has been 250 years since David Hume, through the rigorous application of pure reason, concluded that neither the inner world of the self nor the outer world of physical matter could possibly exist. Hume then turned and laughed at himself and at what he had accomplished:

> This sceptical doubt . . . is a malady, which can never be radically cur'd, but must return upon us every moment, however we may chace it away . . . Carelessness and in-attention alone can afford us any remedy. For this reason I rely entirely upon them; and take it for granted, whatever may be the reader's opinion at this present moment, that an hour hence he will be persuaded there is both an external and an internal world . . .

It is one thing to arrive at an intolerable conclusion by pure intellection, though. It is quite another to have it presented to you by a brilliant young man showing the scientific evidence on a computer screen, an experience both Tom Wolfe and I have enjoyed, or endured. Watching my computational genomicist skimming cheerfully through his websites, through ideas and findings that undermine everything we think we know about ourselves, I had a Wordsworth moment:

> . . . Great God! I'd rather be
> A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
> So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
> Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
> Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
> Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn.

For all that, I am not quite ready yet to give up belief in the con-

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scious self. Although the neuroscientists are chasing the self through ever narrower and darker passageways of the brain, they have not caught it yet, and there are good reasons to believe they never will. Roger Penrose's book about fundamental physics offers one of those reasons. Physicists have been pursuing matter for much longer, and with much more fruitful consequences, than neuroscientists have been pursuing mind, yet still the nature of physical reality eludes us. What *is* the physical world composed of? If you make it through the 1,000-odd pages of Penrose's book, through the explanations of tensor calculus, Clifford algebras, spinors, twistors, Riemann surfaces, and Feynman propagators, you may have an inkling, but that is all you will have. If you can't hack all that heavy-duty math, you won't even have an inkling, ever.

Perhaps, for a few decades at least, we can continue to ignore the scientists sapping away at our vulgar metaphysic. Perhaps Hume's prescription of "carelessness and in-attention" will see us through for a while longer. Math professor Michael Harris tells a true story about a conversation held in his presence during a conference in Münster, Germany, last year. Over a restaurant dinner, three professional mathematicians resurrected an issue from the great "crisis of foundations" that racked mathematics in the early 20th century—during roughly the period from Russell's paradox (1901) to Gödel's theorem (1931). This crisis arose because mathematicians had begun inquiring into the logical and philosophical underpinnings of their subject, trying to find the fundamental axioms underlying all of math, seeking unshakably firm foundations for the process of mathematical proof.

Well, the three diners all expressed different opinions on the issue in question, which is a very crucial one. ("The ontological status of the continuum"—but you don't need to know this to understand my point.) Harris sought to pursue the discussion down into deeper matters . . . but found that his colleagues did not have the necessary knowledge, and *didn't actually care*. These foundational issues, though interesting in their own right, and fine for a few casual conversational exchanges over the dinner table, do not really matter in the day-to-day work of most mathematicians.

We Americans are heading into a "crisis of foundations" of our own right now. Our judicial elites, with politicians and pundits close behind, are already at work deconstructing our most fundamental institutions—marriage, the family, religion, equality under the law. The human sciences are showing human nature in a strange new light. Yet perhaps all this will matter as little in the daily lives of Americans a few decades from now as Russell's paradox and Gödel's theorem matter to working mathematicians today. Perhaps we shall come to our senses and stop trying to analyze and deconstruct our humanity down to the bitter end. Perhaps we shall realize that in order to get on properly with life, as with mathematics, a great many things just need to be taken for granted. What will our new metaphysic be? Perhaps the one that sustained Bertrand Russell's grandmother: "What is mind? No matter. What is matter? Never mind." **NR**

From our Catalogue

crede ut intellegas

The affinity between the life of the mind and the life of faith is embedded in Augustine's dictum, "crede ut intellegas", "believe in order that you may understand." For Augustine, truth consists in the intelligence's conforming itself to the divine sense of existence. Intelligence consists not, then, in the more or less brilliant performance of the mind, but in knowing reality as it is. To that end, faith and reason conjoined form a strong defense against the temptations of sophistry, triviality, ideology, fragmentation, skepticism, fideism, and anti-intellectualism. Faith, as the acknowledgment of the divine order of things, and reason, as the seeing of reality as it truly is, are partners in the Catholic intellectual tradition.

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■ ESSAY II

So, You Want To Win the Culture Wars?

It would help to engage in a little culture

ROSS DOUTHAT

I'VE never attended a major film festival, but it's a safe bet that none of them—not Venice or Cannes, not Sundance or Toronto—begins its Saturday-night screening with the Pledge of Allegiance. Or opens nearly every film with a "support-our-troops" montage of military photos, set to a pulsing rock beat. Or passes around collection boxes for the "Wounded Warrior Project," and invites filmgoers to write letters of encouragement to U.S. troops abroad.

Into this breach has stepped the American Film Renaissance festival, which debuted in Dallas this September in a strip-mall movie theater sandwiched between sprinkler-fed subdivisions and a Smoothie King. Billing itself as "the nation's first and only conservative film festival," the AFR weekend was a cheerfully ramshackle affair, where left-wing journalists milking the weekend for laughs easily outnumbered movie stars. And that's only if Timothy Bottoms—whose Showtime-produced Bush hagiography, *DC 9/11: Time of Crisis*, was screened on opening night—really counts as a star at all.

The festival was the brainchild of Jim and Ellen Hubbard, she a chipper trial attorney with bouffant hair, he a heavyset man with the hangdog air of a less-than-ruthless Harvey Weinstein. "It was a labor of love," Jim told me, and so it would seem, since the couple raised most of the necessary money from family and friends (their only sponsors were a local talk-radio station and WorldNetDaily), screened and selected every entrant themselves, and spent most of the festival scrambling around with walkie-talkies, keeping the theaters full, the soda flowing, and the films running on time.

The one thing they couldn't do, alas, was find enough good films to fill even a longish afternoon, let alone a weekend. The festival's movies were often awful in fascinating ways, but they were awful nonetheless. Sometimes—as in the piously minded *Beyond 'The Passion of the Christ': The Impact*—the filmmaker assembled reams of interesting footage and then simply threw it all on screen, with little sense of editing or narrative drive (and a cloyingly preachy voice-over). Other films were more slickly packaged but still lousy, like libertarian radio host Larry Elder's pro-gun, anti-Michael Moore polemic *Michael and Me*, or the soullessly polished *George W. Bush: Faith in the White House*. Still others were painfully tone-deaf, like *Innocents Betrayed*, which could have passed for a History Channel documentary about genocide, save for a narrator intoning—over shots of piled Cambodian skulls or trains bound for Bergen-Belsen—that gun control inevitably leads to state-sponsored mass murder. (*Innocents Betrayed*, I later learned, was produced by the Wisconsin-based Jews for the Preservation of Firearm Ownership. Make of that what you will.)

So there was nothing in Dallas to make liberal Hollywood quake in its boots, and much to make it chuckle derisively: Stars-and-Stripes hats and "I Luv Halliburton" T-shirts, a ubiquitous British journalist peddling grievances against the BBC and the *Guardian*, and an almost pathological obsession with Michael Moore among filmmakers and audience members alike. (Though to be fair, the weekend's second anti-Moore flick—*Michael Moore Hates America*, by a twentysomething documentarian named Mike Wilson—was easily the festival's finest, and funniest, effort.)

Grassroots indie cinema isn't the Right's strong suit just yet, in other words. "Microsoft wasn't Microsoft in its first year," Jim Hubbard insisted gamely, but the reality of the weekend was better captured by filmmaker Jack Cashill—a friendly Kansan whose quasi-documentary, *Mega Fix*, spun a dazzling conspiracy theory linking the Oklahoma City bombing and the crash of TWA Flight 800 to covered-up acts of Islamist terrorism. A conservative film festival, he told me, is "like a bear riding a bicycle—you don't criticize its technique, you're just happy the bear can ride."

THE PASSION OF CONSERVATIVES

This wry wisdom was a far cry from the enthusiasms of the festival's opening night, when film critic Michael Medved assured an eager crowd that *The Passion of the Christ* had revealed the existence of a vast and heretofore-untapped market for conservative-leaning art and artists. He might have had a point—but a weekend watching the AFR's offerings suggested a striking lack of the creative wherewithal needed to take advantage of such an audience.

For this, conservatives can blame the left-wing lockstep of the country's artistic community—but they can also blame themselves. Over the last 40 years, the Right has labored in the wilderness, building a counter-establishment of magazines, colleges, think tanks, and news networks, with an array of foundations—Olin and Bradley, Scaife and Koch—to finance them. And in this wilderness campaign, conservatives have been wildly successful, training a generation that can craft election strategies, run for Congress, plot entitlement reform, and even make a bid to transform the Middle East.

But when it comes to literature, architecture, television, and film, the Right has mainly expended energy trying to *reduce* its power to shape the artistic landscape—highlighted by its long-running and only recently abandoned effort to abolish the National Endowment for the Arts. For all the supposed vastness of the Vast Right-Wing Conspiracy, its only significant tentacles in the artistic realm consist of a few excellent but low-circulation journals

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like *The New Criterion*. Even the recently founded *Claremont Review of Books*, envisioned as a conservative answer to *The New York Review of Books*, concerns itself almost exclusively with works of history and political philosophy. The conservative footprint in film and music is all but invisible—despite all the attention-grabbing plaintive liberal ink spilled over the politics of Fox News.

Which helps to explain, perhaps, why conservatives can win election after election, yet all the while endure a slow and bitter cultural retreat. The Family Research Center may be a great tool for taking over Congress, but a thousand think tanks can't match the transformative power of *Friends* and *Will & Grace*, Madonna and *Sex and the City*.

It's not that all American art is political, exactly, or that conservative themes are entirely absent from the artistic scene. (Though they do come into relief largely in historical dramas, safely removed from the issues of the day, as in last year's *Master and Commander*, which celebrated patriotism, military valor, and masculine solidarity with an enthusiasm unimaginable in contemporary depictions of war.) But few would dispute that the general worldview promoted by the mass-market arts in America is a species of middlebrow leftism.

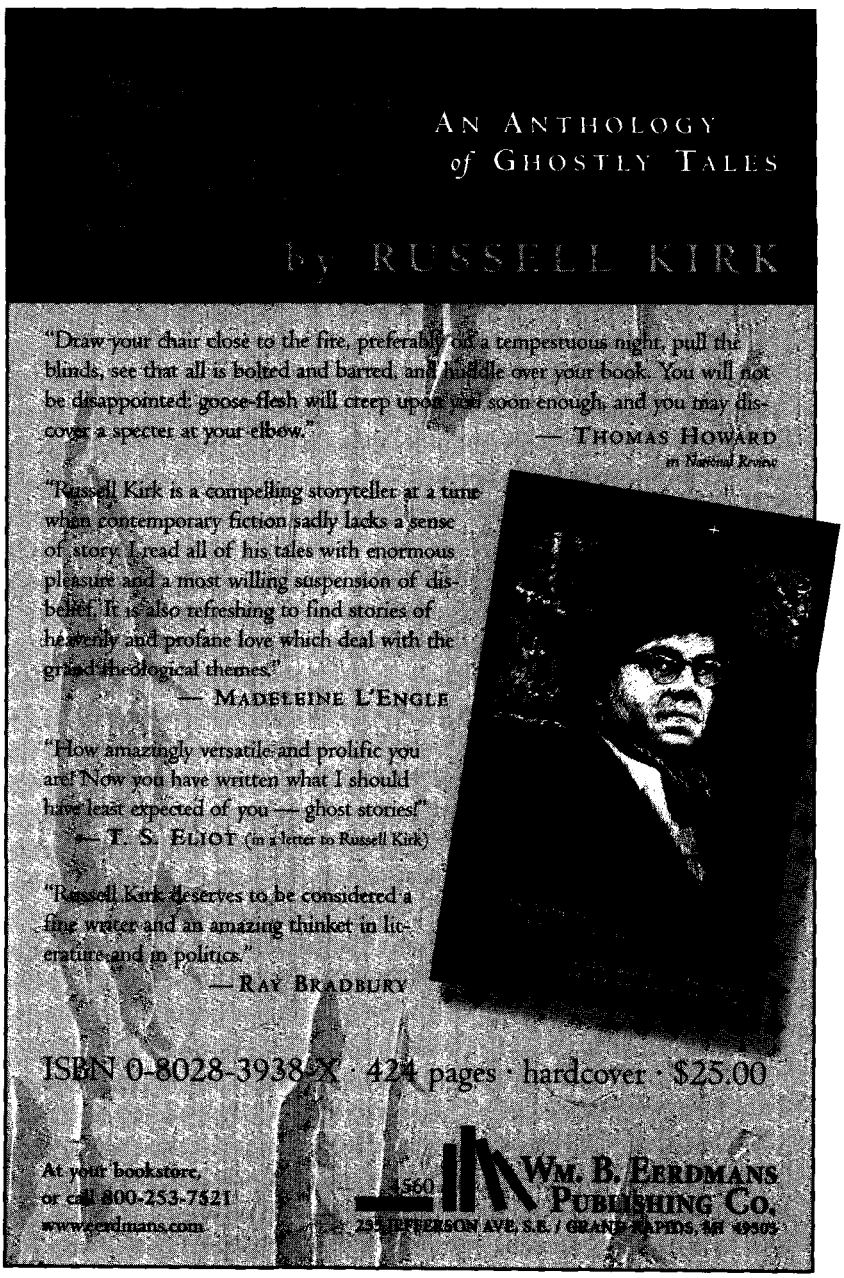
There's nothing inherently wrong with this. Great art often transcends politics, as in Shakespeare's plays, or the more recent greatness that is *The Sopranos*—but it just as often doesn't, and we're all the better for it. Charles Dickens was a Victorian liberal, Fyodor Dostoevsky was a reactionary Russian-Orthodox Christian, and Bruce Springsteen is an unreconstructed working-class populist: Few of their aficionados would have it any other way.

No, the problem for conservatives isn't that liberal American artists promote left-wing values in their art—it's that the Right has so consistently failed to nurture artistic talent of its own. Would-be politicians can make the trek to the Leadership Institute, up-and-coming journalists have the Collegiate Network, but the right-leaning artist is left to drift alone through a professional world where avowed conservatism can be the kiss of death.

Small wonder, then, that conservative interactions with popular culture tend to be confined to election-season celebrity-baiting—think Dan Quayle versus Murphy Brown, or Bob Dole taking on Hollwood "depravity"—and faintly desperate attempts to claim as conservative any book or show that evinces hostility toward lefty smugness or political correctness (as in the recent vogue enjoyed by the silly notion of "South Park conservatism").

Indeed, one often has the sense that too many conservatives have bought into a theory of art beloved of most of today's left-wing artists: specifically, that it wouldn't make any difference if the American Film Renaissance festival were funded by the Coors family and staffed with smooth Heritage Foundation greeters. Even with a Sundance-style budget and a red carpet free of popcorn stains, this argument goes, the movies being screened at a conservative-leaning film festival would still be lousy, since the people who *make* good art are inherently predisposed toward left-wing politics.

Certainly, the conservative artist is a contradiction in modern American culture, glimpsed at work only in the occasional Mark Helprin novel or Whit Stillman film. The Right does have its share of prolific and excellent critics—Terry Teachout, Hilton Kramer, this magazine's Mark Steyn—but conservative novelists, filmmakers, painters, and (non-country) musicians are very thin on the ground. John Kerry, conversely, needed only to snap his fingers and a host of actors, directors, singers, and playwrights rose to campaign for him. Even the novelists got into the act, with a series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by Russell Kirk
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— T. S. Eliot (in a letter to Russell Kirk)
"Russell Kirk deserves to be considered a fine writer and an amazing thinker in literature and in politics."
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of anti-GOP "Where's My Democracy?" readings that drew a Who's Who of young literati—Jonathan Safran Foer, Michael Chabon, Dave Eggers, Alice Sebold, David Foster Wallace, and so on.

Yet it hasn't always been thus. A roll call of right-leaning creatives in English literature alone would summon Jonathan Swift and Samuel Johnson, Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Rudyard Kipling, T. S. Eliot, Evelyn Waugh, Anthony Powell, Walker Percy, and a host of lesser lights. For most of these writers, too, their political worldview was integral to their literary vision—which suggests that American authors who swoon over *Four Quartets* or *A Dance to the Music of Time* might have an interest in encouraging a touch of ideological diversity within their own ranks.

Admittedly, it's worth wondering how many of the conservative writers listed above would be culturally comfortable in today's Republican party, living cheek-by-jowl with the middlebrow moviegoers at the AFR festival. It may be that the Right's cultural problem lies, more than anything, with the *style* of American conservatism, or at least American Republicanism, whose cheery embrace of big business is unlikely to set artistic hearts aflutter. The old-line, European Right's politics of throne and altar (especially altar, as Mel Gibson and T. S. Eliot can attest), on the other hand, had much to offer the aesthetically inclined—much more, arguably, than a conservatism defined by tax cuts, deregulation, and the celebration of the entrepreneurial spirit.

The best the Right can do?

THE CONSERVATIVE RENAISSANCE

If this is the case, then the best hope for a conservative "renaissance" of the sort envisioned by Jim and Ellen Hubbard may lie with the artistic Left's principal bogeyman: Christian conservatives. It's a strange thought, since America's conservative Christian subculture has produced a remarkable efflorescence of artistic dreck over the last few decades, in music, art, film, and literature alike, of which the egregious *Left Behind* series is only the latest example. But *The Passion of the Christ* may have changed all that—not, *pace* Michael Medved, because it revealed the existence of a conservative audience, but because it made manifest the possibility of conservative art. *The Passion* sold a traditional Catholic aesthetic to evangelical Protestants, and—despite horrifying critics accustomed to a somewhat, shall we say, tamer interpretation of Christianity—reaped a cultural phenomenon for its efforts, while exposing its religious audience to the possibility of an imaginative realm beyond the usual potboilers and pious treacle.

None of that would have been possible, of course, without the financial muscle of a movie star's production company. Which makes it appropriate, maybe, that the most realistic buzz at the talent-thin AFR film festival concerned not screenplay-writing or cinematography but one Philip Anschutz, a reclusive Christian billionaire whose Walden Media has been partnering with Hollywood studios to create family-friendly films. Anschutz, the founder of fiber-optics giant Qwest Communications, has been involved thus far in modest hits (last year's *Holes*, this year's critical darling *Ray*) and large-scale duds (*Around the World in 80 Days*); at present, his Walden Media is partnering with Disney for the upcoming adaptation of C. S. Lewis's Christianity-drenched *Chronicles of Narnia*. ("A conservative takes over a Hollywood studio—it's just like the plot of my book!" a Houston developer twanged to me when the subject of Anschutz came up, as he pressed a copy of his self-published novel, *Hollywood Must Be Destroyed*, into my hands.)

And there you have it. Buying your way into the movie industry . . . what could be more Philistine, more redolent of all that American artists loathe about the GOP? Yet that's exactly what needs to be done—as a first step only, but a necessary one. For if there's anything that 50 years of conservative political progress has taught us, it's that institutions matter. The occasional Mel Gibson is all well and good, but a permanent conservative presence in the arts will require (as it did in the news media and on Capitol Hill) a permanent infrastructure—studios and film schools, creative-writing centers and art institutes, where like-minded artists can enjoy solidarity and financial support. In the absence of an obvious talent pool, admittedly, the investment required to create such institutions would require a leap of faith, and an assumption that if you build it, they will come. More important, it would require a leap of imagination on the part of a movement that for too long has pursued cultural ends by political means alone.

One suspects that it's a leap conservatives are ill-equipped to make after spending decades turning up their noses, understandably but fatally, at the fads and fashions of the American artistic scene, and at the decadence and degradation of our popular culture. The Right's long-running cultural critique may be correct, but a critique is no substitute for concrete action. Imagine if the founders of this magazine had contented themselves with prodding at the liberal establishment from the sidelines, and had never waded into the political scrum—had never attempted to change the political order that they so fervently opposed, had never backed Goldwater or Nixon, Reagan or Gingrich. Imagine that kind of above-the-fray paralysis, and you have the state of conservatism's relationship to the American arts.

"Hollywood doesn't take conservatives seriously," people were wont to complain in Dallas, in the dingy confines of a suburban movie complex, as their low-budget, low-quality films unspooled before an appreciative but undemanding audience. They were right, of course—but they were also missing the point. The disdain of the artistic establishment, like the political establishment before it, won't be overcome until conservatives start taking art as seriously as they take politics, and until they understand what should have been understood from the beginning—which is that you can't win the culture wars without culture. **NR**

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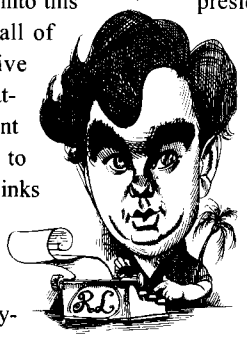
the long view

ROB LONG

From the Guestbook of the Clinton Presidential Library . . .

Marnie Williams, Ft. Smith, Ark.:

Wonderful, wonderful exhibits! Thank you so much for all of the hard work that everyone obviously put into this magnificent library! The Hall of Self-Justification interactive video monitors were fascinating! I really felt like President Clinton was talking directly to me. Although my husband thinks that 389 separate monitors filled with President Clinton explaining himself is overkill, I could barely tear myself away.



The depth and breadth of the self-justifications and explanations—riveting! Kudos to the staff!

Marlee Hopkins, Little Rock, Ark.:

Does he read these? PLEASE CALL ME 392-8848 PLEASE CALL ME I saw you on TV and you looked lonely and CALL ME and you won't be lonely anymore 392-8848 The FAT COW at the desk here is giving me a dirty look so just CALL ME and I can tell you in person what I thought of your library and everything.

Bill Justen, West Memphis, Tenn.:

Pretty good, I guess. But my feeling is, if you're going to sell cigars in the gift shop, you should be able to smoke them, too. I bought a pretty pricey smoke and wanted to enjoy it as I strolled along the Avenue of the Stars, and I was told in no uncertain terms that smoking was not permitted. When I asked why cigars are sold in the gift shop, I was told that these cigars aren't "the smoking kind." Am I missing something? P.S.: The Sharon Stone robot figure in the Hollywood Atrium is busted.

Ryan Poston, Chicago, Ill.:

At first I was like, why are we coming to this place I was like ten when he was president but my parents were like we're here in Little Rock anyways visiting your grandparents for Thanksgiving so just do it and I was bummed but after walking through it I have to admit it's pretty cool especially the trampoline ride at the top of the Ego Tower.

Mrs. Edwina Miller, Shawnee, Okla.:

You need more handicapped stalls in the restrooms on the second level, along the Grand Corridor of Excuses. Great museum! The fritters in the café are delicious!

A. Gore, Nashville, Tenn.:

Well, I suppose I like the architecture and the soaring interior space. I did, though, think that while some parts of his presidency were well-presented (budget-balancing, etc.), I was concerned by some pretty glaring omissions (a section on the most influential and dynamic vice president in American history would have been nice)—and I'm not sure why, exactly, the south-facing windows are blocked by enormous photographs of the former president in his jogging shorts, which isn't very energy-efficient. And why don't they have vice-presidential libraries?

Joseph Peters, Dallas, Tex.:

What I want to know is, if you pay $7 to get into the place, which is steep to begin with, why do you have to pay five dollars EXTRA just to get into the Lincoln Bedroom exhibit? I think there should be a flat fee for ALL of the exhibits. What a rip-off.

Tina Bronson, Jackson, Iowa:

It was fantastic! Strolling along the Lair of the Republicans gave me chills! The spooky music and the cobwebs were such an atmospheric touch! And when I turned the corner and the Gingrich figure reached out in the darkness to grab me, Oh my God! I jumped out of my skin! Such fun! Really just like a time warp!

Rudi Anderson, Willoughby, Ohio:

Interesting stuff. To be honest, I thought I was pretty up on the Clinton presidency, but I had no idea until I spent the day in the Grand Concourse on the War on Terrorism that he had spent so much time fighting the terrorists and Osama bin Laden. I understand that the entire War on Terrorism collection is so large that it will eventually be moved into its own wing, and I look forward to returning here when it's all up. Loved the picture of the president in his Army Rangers camouflage outfit.

Marlee Hopkins, Little Rock, Ark.:

I'm writing this again, okay? I'm serious! You're so hot so PLEASE CALL ME 392-8848 PLEASE CALL ME. The FAT COW at the desk is on break right now so I'm writing this again cuz I know you're going to get this and CALL ME 392-8848 and I can make you feel better and relaxed and everything you're SO HOT in the video with that Jewish guy and that other guy in the do-rag and if you call me I will TOTALLY make it worth your while. I am petite, blonde, full-figured, very energetic CALL ME CALL ME 392-8848. Okay?

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IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM

SANTA CLAUS

The North Pole

Dear *NR* Friend,

We'll have a Merry Christmas, as always, but it's that New Year I'm worried about -- it's sure to fall short of being "happy." That's tough for a jolly guy like me to admit.

But we must face facts: 2005 will no doubt be a vitriolic, humbug-filled year of post-election partisan scroogery.

You know the score, and are bracing for the worst, but then you read *National Review*. You're fortunate! But what about those friends and kinfolk who don't get America's best magazine?! Unless you rescue them, they'll be at the mercy of liberal media indoctrinators throughout 2005!

That won't happen if, this Christmas, you give those dearest to you a full-year gift subscription (25 big issues!) to *National Review*.

NR is the gift that keeps on giving (every fortnight!), providing the lucky recipient of your generosity with sanity that will stretch from Inauguration Day 'til year's end.

I've said it before: There's no better Christmas present you can give than *National Review*. And that will be extra true for 2005.

So listen to Santa. Give the gift of *National Review*. Unless -- like Tom, Peter, and especially Dan — you want to find a lump of coal in your stocking on Christmas morning!

Ho ho ho!

Santa

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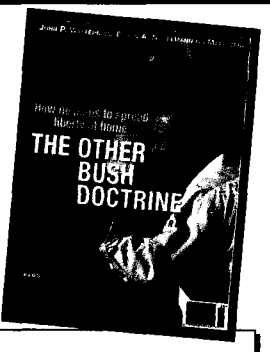

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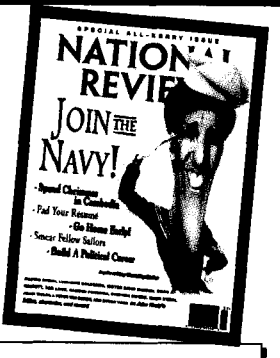

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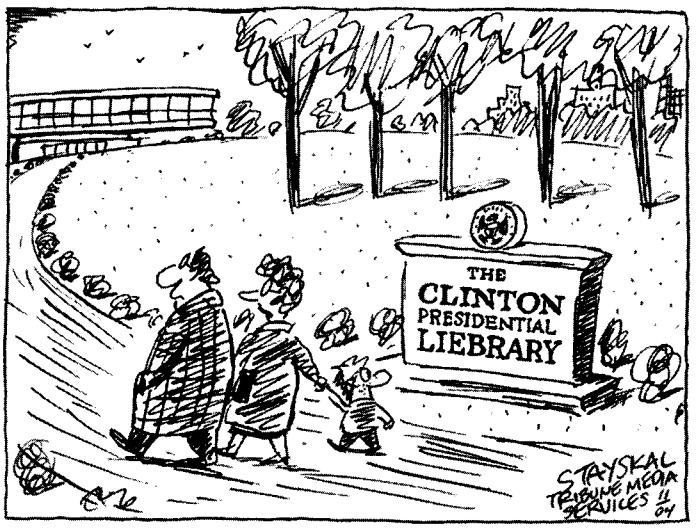
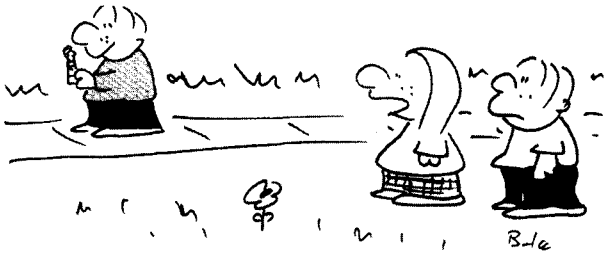
Hillary: It Begins

Her library launch was inspired:
Hill's hubby, triumphant but tired,
Bussed Hillary as Hollywood—
I swear, almost half of it—stood
(Babs Streisand emoted the most)
While Hill ladled Bill with a toast
So spouse-friendly, even the Carters
Got why the girl's busting her garters.

—W. H. von Dreele





"He's a strange kid—he has a William F. Buckley Pez dispenser."

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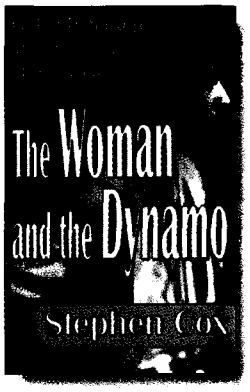
The Dynamic IMP



The Woman and the Dynamo: Isabel Paterson and the Idea of America, by Stephen Cox (Transaction, 418 pp., $39.95)

WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR.

If you were around in 1943 (which is doubtful: even I, age 17, was only just barely around) you may have noticed that three books important to libertarian history coincidentally appeared: three books by three formidable women. There was Ayn Rand's *The Fountainhead*, Rose Wilder Lane's *The Discovery of Freedom*, and Isabel Paterson's *The God of the Machine*.

This was truly a phenomenon. A disposition to spot creeping socialism, let alone the will to contain it, hadn't attracted many people in the book world. Americans—in and out of the book world—were preoccupied with reelecting FDR every now and then, and fighting a great war. Much pride was taken in the ship-a-day production achievements of the national economy. This had been a striking response, triggered by the huge demands of a world war, by a nation mistakenly thought unarousably sleepy after ten years of unemployment, desultory growth, inflation, and state welfarism. Also in 1943, we are reminded by author Stephen Cox, Albert Jay Nock published his anarchistic daydream, *Memoirs of a Superfluous Man*, hitting a fatalistic note on any prospect of a return to individualism. One year later, Friedrich Hayek brought out *The Road to Serfdom*, a formal academic protest against statism, and we have ever since been aware of the growing literature against omnipotent government.

That unforeseen explosion in anti-statist thought and writing in 1943 encouraged the little community of conservatives, here and there. Conservatives were glad for signs of literary and philosophical life from dissenters from the collectivist age. Yet, looking back, it was as if a couple of enterprising buglers had risen in the libraries and sounded trumpets to demobilize the great statist aggregations: Ayn Rand and Rose Lane and Isabel Paterson and Albert Jay Nock and Friedrich Hayek warning against the burgeoning public sector. But nobody paid them much heed. In Britain, socialism was formally affirmed. In the U.S., Americans egged on the New Deal at home, and the colleges' economics departments settled down as branches of Lord Keynes. The U.S. was not about to change fundamental political direction at the plea of three sob sisters, one superfluous man, and one Austrian doomsayer.

Yet the books were special events. Rand's *Atlas Shrugged* eventually competed with the Bible in sales, though Russell Kirk was probably right in saying that most people read her for the fornicating bits. Rose Wilder Lane is gone. But—Isabel Paterson has now attracted a biographer. Stephen Cox has written not so much a book about a book, as a book about that book's author, a remarkable lady not entirely attractive, not readily accessible, but ever so gifted.

Mr. Cox's *Woman* was born in 1886, and died in 1961. Isabel Paterson was born in Canada and raised in rural Michigan in extreme poverty. She worked as a waitress, a dishwasher, a bookkeeper, and was finally spotted as having an acute verbal intelligence, which discovery led to a full-time editorial life. She married and quickly divorced, all but obliterating the memory of her husband, of whom she never spoke. She published nine relatively unnoticed novels and took on her famous book column.

She was everywhere known as "Pat," and it is somewhere recorded that her bone-lazy in-laws excised one of the t's from the conventional spelling of Patterson on the grounds that, over a lifetime, that economy would substantially reduce the energies expended in writing out their last name. Isabel Paterson's third cognomen was "I.M.P." These were the initials she used in the learned and terrifying weekly book column that, for 25 years, she wrote for the *Herald Tribune Book Review*. In it she did not disguise her dislikes, which were legion and florid. But the paper's owners (New York's Ogden Reids) moved leftward during the war, and her weekly voice was an intensifying irritant to a family that sought composure in Eastern-seaboard liberalism. The owners finally summoned the courage to fire her, in 1949. They gave out the excuse that the *Trib* was short of funds; which it was, eventually going out of business in the 1960s.

But for a while, the *Trib* was a vital GOP-oriented publication. The paper's political protégé had run for president in 1940, and for a while the exacting I.M.P. was keen on him. But she finally lost patience when, returned from a tour of the Soviet Union, Willkie wrote that "Russia is an effective society. It works." *That* did it for Pat. She was unforgiving, as a matter of principle, and absolutely unforgiving with Soviet apologists. It didn't matter in the least that Wendell Willkie had run for president against her nemesis FDR, or that he was the full-time lover of her boss, book editor Irita Van Doren. So she was out of work at 63, and lived on, indigently, for twelve years, contemptuously refusing to cash her Social Security checks.

What seemed her entire life was pointing to the grand appearance of *The God of the Machine*. This volume on man, life, and energy was greeted by those in her ideological company, fellow individualists, as a great event. Her (occasional) friend Ayn Rand labeled it "the best and most complete statement of the basic principles of our side, the greatest defense of capitalism I have ever read. It does for

Mr. Buckley's current book is *Miles Gone By: A Literary Autobiography*.

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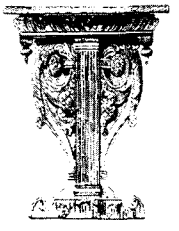
capitalism what *Das Kapital* did for the Reds."

The book is complex. It is an intense elaboration on the theme of the individual and the machine. Her ideological thesis is that in order to interact productively, man and his dynamo must be free. Having said this much about the book, one feels the tongue tying up. Professor Cox discloses that Paterson's friend and enthusiast Sam Welles, who wrote for *Time* magazine, was so carried away by the book that he undertook a 22,000-word condensation of it, which he tried to sell to the *Reader's Digest*. That didn't work, though it is worth recalling that *The Road to Serfdom*, by no means an easy book to read, was indeed condensed for the *Reader's Digest*, whose editor, DeWitt Wallace, liked to be reminded that there were conservative philosophers out there whose ideas were congruent with those of the *Reader's Digest*.

But the point I pause over is that Mrs. Paterson's book was not readable in 1943, isn't readable in 2004, and has had no definable impact, discernible to this author, on the corpus of conservative, anti-socialist thought. Having confessed my inability to paraphrase the book's message, I thought I should let Mrs. Paterson speak for herself. And so I quote herewith an entire paragraph in which she understood herself to be speaking indelibly on the thesis of the God of the Machine.



The catechism of a free and productive society, she began, rests on "considerations" which are not "sentimental":

> *They constitute the mechanism of production and therefore of power. Personal liberty is the pre-condition of the release of energy. Private property is the inductor which initiates the flow. Real money is the transmission line; and the payment of debts comprises half the circuit. The possibility of a short circuit, ensuing leakage and breakdown or explosion, occurs in the hook-up of the political organization to the productive process. This is not a figure of speech or analogy, but a specific physical description of what happens.*

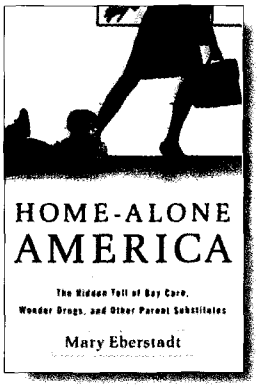
Well. Her book *is* easier to read about than to read, and Mr. Cox gives a lively account of some of the trials I.M.P. endured and imposed on others. In the early days of NATIONAL REVIEW, a considerable effort was made to solicit her writing. *The Woman and the Dynamo* documents that courtship. (Buckley "offered her help with her mortgage. He offered her a weekly book column. He tried to engage her to teach his four-year-old son to read.") Mr. Cox quotes letters to her from WFB, some of her replies, all of it illustrating the difficulties she made for collaborations of any kind. I wrested four or five pieces from her. The last one was, I thought, so wantonly abusive of a particular set of people (the Du Pont family), that I attempted a slight editorial modification.

The incident is amusingly related by Professor Cox. "When he [WFB] received Paterson's manuscript, he telegraphed her, 'I think your piece is brilliant, amusing, readable and uncharitable and that we should publish it . . . I will suggest a few minor changes aimed at dissipating the impression that you are pursuing a vendetta.' She would not see the logic of this proposal; in fact, she would not discuss it. She replied in the words of a Civil War general: 'I tole you twicet, Goddamit, NO.' That, she told Buckley, was Nathan Bedford Forrest's response to an insolent request a hundred years ago, and that was 'the response today of me IMP.'"

"So that," Mr. Cox tells his readers, "was the end of her association with NATIONAL REVIEW." His coda here is worth quoting: "She had already alienated such important conservatives as Russell Kirk. Others, such as Whittaker Chambers, viewed her as a disruptive influence. 'I am not "sound" on Mrs. Paterson,' [Chambers] wrote to Buckley. Chambers went on: 'Unlike many others, I go by the general rule that almost anything she says is likely to be wrong. My observation is that she is capable of brilliant insights which merely confuse things the more because they play upon a corpus of notions, which are neither bad nor undesirable: by and large. I think they have almost no relation to reality as it is. She grew up, as she once told me, in an age when men were men. She seems to me to overlook completely the fact that it was those men who prepared our age when pygmies are pygmies.'"

The Woman and the Dynamo is a fine and conscientious biography of a strange and remarkable woman. **NR**

The Hearth Defended



Home-Alone America: The Hidden Toll of Day Care, Wonder Drugs, and Other Parent Substitutes, by Mary Eberstadt (Sentinel, 288 pp., $25.95)

MYRNA BLYTH

It's one of history's oldest questions: "What's a mother to do?" And, in this provocative new book, Mary Eberstadt of the Hoover Institution offers a simple and straightforward answer: *stay home with the children*. She has concluded that most of the problems of today's youngsters—from biting toddlers to depressed middle-schoolers to out-of-control teenagers—can be blamed on out-of-the-house moms and absentee dads. "Divorce and dual income, dual income and divorce," she writes. "The refrain hums like a mantra through the literature" of dysfunctional youth.

When a female author writes a book criticizing mothers for not being focused enough on their children—and, perhaps, being too focused on their careers—she must explain how she herself managed to accomplish her writing without short-changing her brood. In her introduction, Eberstadt does so, at considerable length:

Myrna Blyth, former editor of *Ladies' Home Journal*, is a contributor to National Review Online and author of *Spin Sisters: How the Women of the Media Sell Unhappiness—and Liberalism—to the Women of America*.

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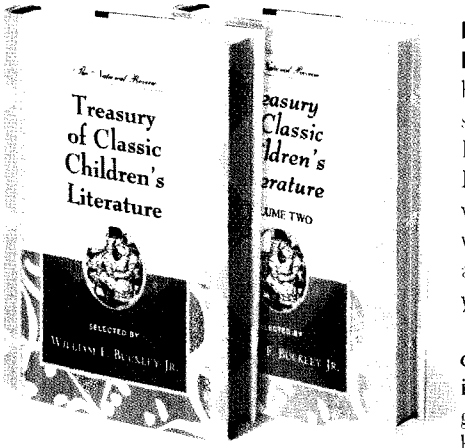

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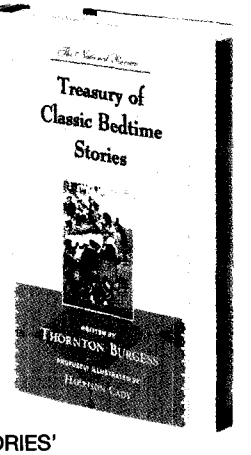

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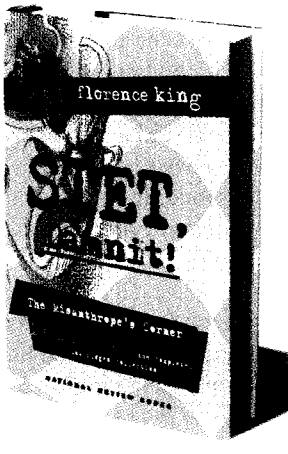

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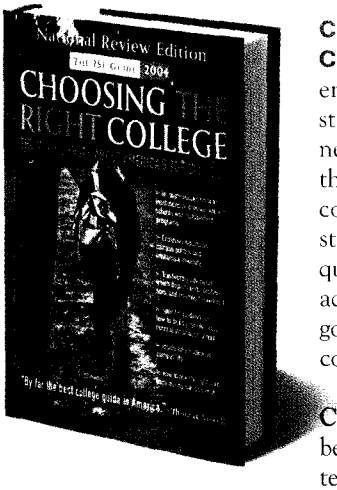

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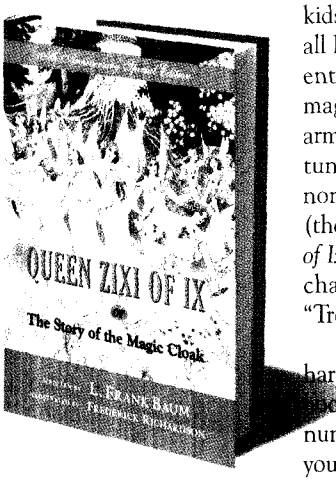

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I am an at-home mother of four whose "fieldwork" consists mostly of fifteen years or so spent around sandboxes, schools, carpools, baseball games, and the like and whose intellectual work is conducted by fits and starts and at odd hours in the basement, one wall over from the washing machine and another removed from the Nintendo set-up. I haven't had a "real" office in more than twelve years. Until very recently motherhood also meant that I did very little writing apart from the occasional essay or review. Today things are different. Three of my children are at school all day long and the youngest is on the verge of it, so there is more time for reading and writing than there has been for most of the last fifteen years. I have a part-time paid baby sitter who is upstairs while I am down, a husband who often works at home, and older children who also help with the youngest one. Thus the "how" of the book.

Oh, dear. Would any father, even the most devoted, writing a book about America's children ever have to explain his work habits so exhaustively? The fact that Eberstadt is so compelled confirms how intense the decades-old moms-at-home-vs.-moms-at-work debate remains—and how controversial Eberstadt's challenging book could turn out to be. Sheila Wellington, former head of Catalyst, an organization that supports professional women, and now a professor at NYU's Stern School of Business, told me, "I still spend much of my time talking about the work-and-home balance. That's what my female MBA students still want to hear about."

Yet Eberstadt's focus, she makes clear, is not on mothers and how their career choices affect them, but rather on how these choices affect their children. The book is not about the search for balance by today's women—a subject we read about ad nauseam in women's magazines—but rather about how lonely, unsupervised, and unbalanced millions of our children's lives have become. Eberstadt says the goal of her book is to "put children and adolescents front and center [and] to ask what the empirical and extra-empirical record shows so far about this relatively new and unknown world in which many parents, children, and siblings spend many or most of their waking hours apart."

If you are a working mom and don't want to feel guilty, stop now. Eberstadt is very effective in making her case that as "more and more children have spent considerably less time in the company of their parents . . . the fundamental measures of their well being" have scandalously declined. For example, in the first anecdote in the book's first chapter—about day care, which children now attend while still in their diapers—she sympathetically describes a sick toddler, who should be home in bed, spending all day at a daycare center plaintively calling for his mommy. Child-care workers report that parents who are unable or unwilling to miss a day at work often dose such youngsters with Tylenol to bring down their fevers before dropping them off at day care. Eberstadt also describes angry two- and three-year-olds who act out their aggression, and wonders about the mental state of "babies and toddlers who take up biting as a habit."

Eberstadt's book is about how lonely, unsupervised, and unbalanced millions of our children's lives have become.

The author notes the callousness of some of day care's defenders, such as feminist writers Susan Faludi and Susan Chira, who acknowledge that very small children may get sick more often because of the time they spend away from home but contend that they "are hardier when they are older." Eberstadt comments that "the real trouble with day care is twofold . . . It increases the likelihood that kids will be unhappy, and the chronic rationalization of that unhappiness renders adults less sensitive to children's needs." Point taken.

Eberstadt documents other harmful effects of today's parents' lack of involvement in their children's well-being. In her chapter on "Why Dick and Jane Are Fat," she maintains it is not the oversized portions, the increase of sweets in our diets, or the lack of exercise that is to blame for our supersized kids: "Today's child fat problem is largely the result of adults not being there to supervise what kids eat." That may be a considerable oversimplification, but one cringes with guilt when she cites some telling examples of how missing parents bribe kids with food: "Mom won't be there for dinner so why don't you treat yourself to pizza and those horrible cinnamon things you like." Or "Sorry I missed your game/play/assembly this morning. How about an ice cream to celebrate?" I doubt there is a working mother who hasn't tried that maneuver.

Eberstadt is also provocative on a subject she has written about knowledgeably before: the overmedicating of our troubled or, should we say, troublesome children, whom harried or self-involved parents just can't handle. In recent years there has been an explosion in the number of children diagnosed with an alphabet of ailments such as ADD or ADHD (attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder) and other "conduct" disorders such as ODD (oppositional defiant disorder), SAD (separation anxiety disorder), and OCD (obsessive compulsive disorder). Daniel Patrick Moynihan coined the phrase "defining deviancy down" to describe how social pressures were leading to the redefinition—the normalization—of behavior once seen as pathological. "In the case of the juvenile mental problems," Eberstadt writes, we are doing the opposite: "We are defining deviancy up so that children who would have been considered normal a quarter century ago are now judged to have intrinsic 'brain problems' and are treated accordingly."

Because of this, our children are being dosed with behavior-modifying drugs at a startling rate. Friends have told me that in some private schools in Manhattan, more than half the children receive their daily meds at lunchtime from the school nurse. Over the past decade the production of Ritalin, the most frequently prescribed of these drugs, has increased 700 percent. In fact, the drug's manufacturer created a seven-inch Mr. Potato Head look-alike toy called "Ritalin Man" to "help the medicine go down," a marketing ploy that should make us all cringe.

Yet Eberstadt claims that she doesn't want her book to make parents feel guilty, not exactly. "The purpose of these pages is not to ask what any one woman or man has decided to do. It is rather to ask what the accumulation of many millions of such decisions is doing to the children and adolescents of this society." Her hope is "to replace our current low moral bar regard-

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ing nurture with a more humane standard acknowledging that individuals and society would be better off if more parents spent more time with children."

That may indeed be happening, and not merely because mothers are once more becoming appropriately dutiful. I hope Eberstadt watched and was cheered by a recent *60 Minutes* segment, reported by Lesley Stahl, which featured a group of highly educated women who had chosen to stay home full-time with their children. Their choice made a feminist who was interviewed during the segment furious, and seemed, to some degree, to confuse Stahl, a working-woman icon. But the mothers were sensible and tough-minded about what they had lost by making this choice and what they had gained. They didn't want their kids home alone, most of all because they wanted to be with them. They recognized the benefit not only for their children but for themselves. It is an argument Eberstadt never makes but one that would surely enhance her important, thought-provoking book. **NR**

Absolutism Redux

The Second Bill of Rights: FDR's Unfinished Revolution and Why We Need It More than Ever, by Cass Sunstein (Basic, 282 pp., $25)

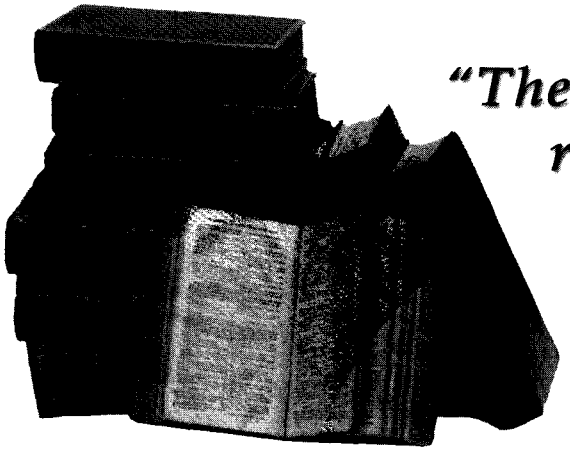
TOM G. PALMER

You owe your life—and everything else—to the sovereign. The rights of subjects are not natural rights, but merely grants from the sovereign. There is no right even to complain about the actions of the sovereign, except insofar as the sovereign allows the subject to complain. These are the principles of unlimited, arbitrary, and absolute power, the principles of such rulers as Louis XIV. Intellectuals have assiduously promoted them; think of Jean Bodin and Thomas Hobbes.

Mr. Palmer is a senior fellow at the Cato Institute.

A new intellectual champion of absolutism has now emerged. Mild-mannered University of Chicago law professor Cass Sunstein has been advancing the radical notion that all rights—including rights usually held to be "against" the state, such as the right to freedom of speech and the right not to be arbitrarily imprisoned or tortured—are grants *from* the state. In a book co-authored with Stephen Holmes, *The Cost of Rights*, he argued that "all legal rights are, or aspire to be, welfare rights," that is, positive grants from the state. There is no difference in kind between the right not to be tortured and the right to taxpayer-subsidized dental care.

In his new book, *The Second Bill of Rights*, Sunstein seeks to give constitutional status to welfare rights. The title



"The man who does not read good books has no advantage over the man who cannot read them."

—Mark Twain

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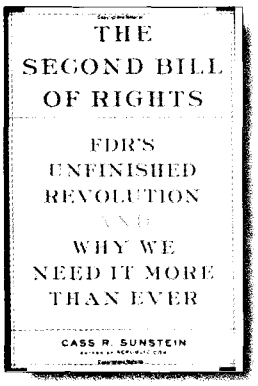
comes from Franklin Roosevelt's 1944 State of the Union address, in which he proclaimed that "necessitous men are not free men" and proposed a "second Bill of Rights under which a new basis of security and prosperity can be established for all." Among the rights FDR proposed were the rights to "a useful and remunerative job," "a decent home," "adequate medical care and the opportunity to achieve and enjoy good health," "adequate protection from the economic fears of old age, sickness, accident, and unemployment," and "a good education."

The mere assertion of those rights isn't enough for Sunstein; he wants to endow them with constitutional status, like the rights that are actually mentioned in the Constitution. He admits that "the founding document does not refer to them, and it is not seriously argued that they are encompassed by anything in the Constitution"—yet on the next page he states that "if the nation becomes committed to certain rights, they may *migrate* into the Constitution itself" (emphasis added). Later on, he asserts that "at a minimum, the second bill should be seen as part and parcel of America's constitutive commitments. Roosevelt's speech proposing the second bill deserves a place among the great documents in the nation's history. Indeed, it can be seen as occupying a place akin to the Declaration of Independence, or perhaps somewhere between the Declaration and the Constitution."



Article V of the Constitution, which specifies how it may be amended, doesn't include "migration," but perhaps "migration of amendments" has itself migrated into the Constitution. As a theory of constitutional law, that is remarkably thin. But let's pass on to other problems with Sunstein's approach.

First, Sunstein's fundamental insistence—that all rights are grants from power—is incoherent. In *The Cost of Rights*, Sunstein and Holmes argued against the idea of "moral rights," or rights that are valid by virtue of something other than force: "When they are not backed by legal force . . . moral rights are toothless by definition. Unenforced moral rights are aspirations binding on conscience, not powers binding on officials." Thus, "the right against being tortured by police officers and prison guards" is simply another welfare right, a right that the state hire monitors to monitor the police and guards, for "duties are taken seriously only when dereliction is punished by the public power drawing on the public purse." This theory generates an absurdity, for it rests on an infinite regress. For me to have a right not to be tortured, the police would have to fear punishment by monitors above them. But for me to have a right not to be tortured, I would have to have a right that the monitors punish the police if they torture me. Do I have that right? I would have it only if the state hired monitors above the monitors, to punish the monitors if they failed to punish the police if the police tortured me. Do I have a right that the monitors of the monitors punish the monitors? Only if there were monitors to monitor the monitors who monitor the monitors who monitor the police, and so on, ad infinitum. The flaw is entirely internal and completely fatal to the theory: If we were to accept the theory, all it would show is that no one has any rights, for the demands of the theory could never be satisfied.

Second, Sunstein insists that without government protection no one would enjoy anything of value, and therefore that all value must be attributed to the action of the state: "Government is 'implicated' in everything people own. . . . If rich people have a great deal of money, it is because the government furnishes a system in which they are entitled to have and keep that money."

The problem here is that Sunstein's economic theory of value is stuck in the period of the classical economists, who tried to attribute all value to one necessary factor of production; for them, that was labor. Sunstein merely substitutes what he has decided is the one necessary factor: the state. But after the "marginal revolution" in economics (circa 1871), no serious thinker should make such a mistake. It is now recognized that we make choices across a great many margins, and that value is not created by a single necessary factor. If that were not so, we could say that farmers produce all value, since without food none of the rest of us would produce anything else; likewise, for other groups and factors of production. The theory of value on which Sunstein rests his case for the welfare state is remarkably naïve and primitive.

Third, the ethical implications Sunstein draws from his theory of value do not withstand scrutiny. He says that "to believe that people have a right to their current holdings, so that any diminution of those holdings amounts to a violation of their rights . . . is an utterly implausible position. Those who possess a great deal do so because laws and institutions, including public institutions, make their holdings possible. . . . In the state of nature—freed from the protection of law and government—how well would wealthy people fare?" Let's see what else this theory would entail: If a doctor were to save my life, then, since the doctor would be responsible for my existence, and therefore for all of the liberty and wealth that I might enjoy or create henceforth, the doctor would have the right to decide what should happen with that liberty and that wealth, since without the doctor neither I, nor the liberty, nor the wealth would exist. In short, Sunstein's ethical theory is just silly.

The Second Bill of Rights may rest on a logical fallacy, a primitive economic theory, and a silly ethical claim, but it is instructive nonetheless. Sunstein's treatment of the problem of how to use the judiciary to enforce welfare rights shows what a radical departure they are from the rule of law, how they introduce arbitrariness into government policy, and how, ultimately, the contradictions and incompatibilities generated by welfare rights undermine the very idea of rights itself—for when "rights" conflict, the state must decide whose "rights" are to be respected, but, since it has been stipulated that both of the conflicting parties are in the right, the state's decisions must be on the basis of something other than right.

Sunstein's work represents a return to the governmental theories of absolutism—of power, rather than of right. Welfare rights are incompatible, not only with property rights, but with law and with the very concept of rights. Professor Sunstein, meet Louis XIV. **NR**

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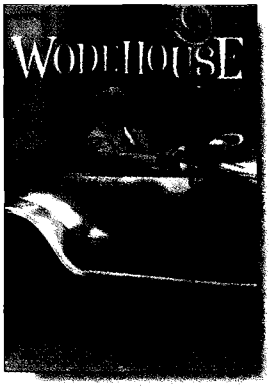
The Gruntler



Wodehouse: A Life,
by Robert McCrum
(Norton, 384 pp., $27.95)

TERRY TEACHOUT

Too Good to Be True Dept.: The two reigning masters of the outrageous simile went to the same English public school. In fact, P. G. Wodehouse ("She looked at me like someone who has just solved the crossword puzzle with a shrewd 'Emu' in the top right-hand corner") and Raymond Chandler ("He looked about as inconspicuous as a tarantula on a slice of angel food") were near-contemporaries at Dulwich College, though they never met. Yet their characteristic modes of expression were similar to the point of occasional interchangeability. Perhaps it was something in the water.

Of course, Wodehouse and Chandler had something else in common: Both were popular novelists whose work was, and is, admired by literary professionals of the highest possible voltage. Everybody who writes about Wodehouse, for instance, mentions—as well they should—what Evelyn Waugh said about him in a 1961 tribute: "For Mr. Wodehouse there has been no Fall of Man; no 'aboriginal calamity.' His characters have never tasted the forbidden fruit. They are still in Eden. The gardens of Blandings Castle are that original garden from which we are all exiled. . . . Mr. Wodehouse's world can never stale. He will continue to release future generations from captivity that may be more irksome than our own."

Only the author of *Decline and Fall* would have had the cheek to slip a reference to Cardinal Newman into a heartfelt tribute to the author of *Uncle Fred in the Springtime*. But Waugh was right on both counts: Wodehouse was a complete innocent, and it was his innocence that made his tales of Victorian life so sempiternally fresh. What other author has written so well about matters of no consequence? I lunched the other day with a friend who told me that a terminally ill relative of his had only just discovered Wodehouse, and was gulping his books down like pain pills. I, too, have turned to them in times of extreme disorder, and found their exquisitely carpentered nonsense to be as comforting as . . . but who am I to be bandying similes with a master? Let's just say that P. G. Wodehouse is a damned good writer for a post-9/11 New Yorker to have around the house.

Contrary to popular belief, he was not an uninteresting man, nor did he lead an uninteresting life. It wasn't particularly eventful, though, and Robert McCrum, the literary editor of the London *Observer*, has cannily made the most of its high spots in *Wodehouse: A Life*. Every Wodehouse fan, for instance, knows at least a little something about how he fell into the hands of the Germans at the beginning of World War II, made the fatal mistake of agreeing to broadcast to America under their auspices, and promptly found himself up to his ears in hot water with the British government. McCrum tells the tale in extensive but not excessive detail, leaving no doubt that Wodehouse was a fool, not a traitor, and once you've read his account of this pitiful interlude, you won't ever have to read anything else about it.

Much the same thing might be said

Mr. Teachout, the drama critic of the *Wall Street Journal* and the music critic of *Commentary*, is the author of *All in the Dances: A Brief Life of George Balanchine*, just out from Harcourt.

ROAD KILL

You may have thought things would come right again
If only you could sit quite still and wait.
—Larkin

Driving to the hospital late last night,
I turned down a road that ran between dark fields.
Up ahead, in the middle of the road,
a small brown rabbit was sitting very still,
looking down at a rabbit who was dead,
a mangled corpse, run over by a car.
Lit up by my headlights, he took off toward the fields.
Slowing down, I drove by the dead rabbit,
then stopped the car, and watched in the rear-view mirror.
The rabbit came back and sat in the road again,
resuming the vigil for his dead friend, or kin.
Quiet, still, he sat and stared at him.

Touched, unable to guess what you felt or thought,
I found it hard to watch you suffer this.
You have no words to understand what death is,
no words to ease your sadness, to console,
to mourn or pray, or tell your friend farewell.

I hope you made it safely home last night
and woke this morning in the warm sunlight.
This morning, at my table under the trees,
because you have no words, I've written these.

—MICHAEL CREAGAN

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about the rest of *Wodehouse: A Life*. I suppose there's no such thing as a definitive biography, but I can't see how this one could be bettered. It tells you everything you want to know about Wodehouse, and does so in a clear, straightforward manner. Where on earth did Jeeves, the valet-superman, and Bertie Wooster, his "mentally negligible" employer-puppet, acquire so rich (if in Bertie's case imperfectly recalled) a storehouse of literary allusion? Just ask McCrum: "Wodehouse's school career was progressive instruction in the classical greats, from Aeschylus to Thucydides . . . In the schoolroom, he studied English literature—from *The Knight's Tale* to *The Faerie Queene*; Dulwich records show that he was generally placed in the middle of his classes."

Wodehouse: A Life is no less good on the subtler matter of what Jeeves might have spoken of as the "individual psychology" of his creator. Left by his indifferent parents in the care of chilly nannies and aged aunts, Wodehouse grew up to be a solitary, emotionally detached, sexually withdrawn adult who shrank from the company of women—qualities that all found their way into his writing, where they were magically transformed into the stuff of low comedy. His chief contribution to the genre of farce, for instance, was to defuse its sexual charge: Such Wodehouse classics as *Heavy Weather* and *The Mating Season* contain all the endlessly elaborate machinations of a play by Feydeau or Joe Orton minus the sadism, which would scarcely have made sense to a man who simmered on so low a flame. No matter how many hoops Bertie may be forced to leap through in the course of a weekend visit to a country house crawling with potential fiancées, he always slinks home to Jeeves at novel's end, alone and happy to be. (Interestingly, Chandler's Philip Marlowe was also sexually diffident, at least until Linda Loring came along. Might the chef at Dulwich have been slipping saltpeter into the porridge?)

McCrum is similarly acute when it comes to Wodehouse's writing methods:

> The agonies of composition are a constant refrain with Wodehouse. However experienced he became, he always had to wrestle every piece of new work to the ground, and would usually fill some four hundred pages with notes toward a scenario before he could get started. "There always comes a moment in the composition of a scenario," he once wrote, "when I pause and say to myself, 'Oh, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown.'" For Wodehouse, planning a story out and actually writing it were two different things. . . . It was only once Wodehouse had thought out his plots that the agony began to abate and his prose could play at liberty in the fields of his imagination. This, especially the endless rewriting, was the part he enjoyed.

In the end, of course, no amount of analysis, however perceptive, can explain how it was that a purveyor of purely commercial fiction was capable of chronicling the imaginary doings of pig-loving lords and Marcus Aurelius-quoting valets in such a way as to arouse the admiration of so hard-headed a critical customer as Evelyn Waugh. The craftsmanship can be explained, the poetry only admired. Such praise would have made Wodehouse cringe, poets ranking just above aunts on the bottom rungs of his bestiary, but there really is no other word for the way in which he handled language. He was a poet of pure delight, in whose dexterous hands words took on an Ionesco-like slipperiness and acquired the power to charm.

Wodehouse was a poet of pure delight, in whose dexterous hands words acquired the power to charm.

I could go on quoting him for days on end, but I'll settle for his best-remembered snippet of verbal prestidigitation, tossed off by Bertie in *The Code of the Woosters*: "He spoke with a certain what-is-it in his voice, and I could see that, if not actually disgruntled, he was far from being gruntled." Never has there been a better gruntler than P. G. Wodehouse, and in Robert McCrum he has found a worthy biographer. **NR**

■ MUSIC ■

A Bin of CDs

JAY NORDLINGER

Let's touch briefly on some recent recordings, taking in composers—contemporary composers—violinists, pianists, and singers. We'll conclude with an oddball CD (not that there won't be some oddness in the meantime).

First come the composers, the most important musicians of all. **Augusta Read Thomas** is busy and honored. Forty years old, this American is composer-in-residence at the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, meaning that she has written several pieces for them. Early this season, however, the New York Philharmonic premiered a Thomas work, *Gathering Paradise* for soprano and orchestra, on texts of Emily Dickinson. (Virtually every American composer sets Dickinson, much as English composers have always set Shakespeare.)

Thomas likes playing with texts, and she plays with a slew of them on a new CD that includes *In My Sky at Twilight*. Also on this disc (from ARTCD) is . . . *Words of the Sea* . . ., a purely orchestral work, but inspired by a Wallace Stevens poem, "The Idea of Order at Key West." Thomas is a skilled craftsman, no matter what you think of what she produces. Her intelligence and ability are not in doubt; we can disagree on her level of musical inspiration.

Like much of her music, . . . *Words of the Sea* . . . seems to be telling you something, insistently. It is demanding that you both listen and think. Its final movement is dubbed "Homage to Debussy," referring to the composer who wrote one of the greatest sea pieces of all, *La Mer*.

In My Sky at Twilight—for soprano and chamber orchestra—includes no fewer than 16 texts, one after the other. Thomas takes snippets from all sorts of writers, so that a 9th-century Japanese scribe (Ono no Komachi) is followed by Robert Browning, and Sappho precedes e. e. cummings, and so on. Thomas also has the wit to include one of the most striking and settable lines in all of poetry, from Christina

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Rossetti: "Pulse for pulse, breath for breath."

She writes in a familiar language of today, Thomas does, full of anxiety, jumpiness, and irresolution. A great deal of contemporary music seems a sci-fi or horror soundtrack. But Thomas has something to say, and should not be ignored.

Arvo Pärt, the Estonian master, has not been ignored for decades, enjoying a place as one of the "holy minimalists" (composers of a spiritual bent who write in the style of minimalism). A new CD from Virgin Classics, however, catches him before minimalism, before, if you will, he became Arvo Pärt. This CD includes *Pro et contra*, a cello concerto from 1966, played by Truls Mørk, the superb Norwegian. And what is this concerto "For and against"? Tonality, seems to be the question. Or, more broadly, the old way (or older ways).

In this piece, as in others on this disc, the composer searches, explores, figuring out what he is supposed to be (and, not insignificantly, what the Soviet authorities permit him to be). In this bracing CD, an excellent mind is reaching toward maturity.

The mature **Tan Dun** fuses the Chinese with the Western—and from him we have a movie score, that to *Hero* (Sony Classical). By the look of the accompanying photos, this is one of those flying-through-the-air flicks. The music is tailor-made for it, of course, but we also hear characteristic Tan Dun. Some parts are exceedingly Romantic, and also a little sentimental. This score is cheesy as well as Chinesey. Itzhak Perlman takes part in this disc, continuing his longtime association with the movies. He plays beautifully and tastefully, never giving the impression that he's slumming.

And now, some violinists (other than Perlman). **Christian Tetzlaff** is a young German, garnering raves all over the world, although I have been slower than others to enthuse. Two of his latest CDs are the complete Bartók sonatas, performed with the (young) Norwegian pianist Leif Ove Andsnes (Virgin), and the complete Brahms sonatas, performed with the (young) German pianist Lars Vogt (EMI Classics). In the Bartók, Tetzlaff is no doubt competent, if not a threat to, say, Josef Szigeti's reputation. It is in the unaccompanied sonata—written for Yehudi Menuhin—that Tetzlaff most shines, contributing the thorniness, virtuosity, and passion that Bartók desires. (Passion in Bartók? You betcha.)

Lars Vogt has a big career, for reasons that elude some of us. The Brahms sonatas with Tetzlaff are—to repeat a word—competent, if not distinguished. Vogt has a strange sense of line, distorting passages with ungainly accents. In repertory so common as the Brahms sonatas, this CD is dispensable (while not unworthy).

Vogt is also heard with the (young) American violinist **Sarah Chang**, in a French vein: the Franck sonata, Saint-Saëns's Sonata No. 1, and the Ravel sonata. (Please, no complaining that Franck was actually Belgian.) This duo is sometimes short on Gallic refinement, and Gallic piquancy, but Chang in particular does some impressive things, for example in the Ravel, infectious and jazzy.

Of the many young violinists today, **Hilary Hahn**—another American—is perhaps king, or queen. Just why is apparent in her new CD with Sir Colin Davis and the London Symphony Orchestra (Deutsche Grammophon). The program consists of the Elgar concerto and Vaughan Williams's *Lark Ascending*. That Sir Colin—probably the greatest Elgar interpreter in the world, along with André Previn—should have wanted to record the concerto with Hahn says something. Hahn is lucky to work with the old conductor; then too, he is lucky to work with her.

The aforementioned **Leif Ove Andsnes** is a solid, intelligent pianist—if occasionally severe—and he can be heard in two Mozart concertos, No. 9 in E flat and No. 18 in B flat, on EMI. (He leads the Norwegian Chamber Orchestra as well.) These performances are typical of him: tidy, sensible—an example to the children (and others).

Another pianist, the Hungarian **András Schiff**, has been on a Janáček jag lately, presiding over a series of concerts featuring that composer's music at Carnegie Hall. Janáček was born in 1854, meaning that this is his 150th birthday—and the music world is besotted with anniversaries. On ECM (not to be confused with EMI), Schiff plays the composer's major piano works, with understanding and commitment. Janáček's piano music may never be as honored as his operas, but it is hardly negligible.

Also in Carnegie Hall, **Daniel Barenboim** played Book I of Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier*, and it was—in the opinion of this critic—a disaster, as the pianist pounded and pedaled and blundered away. Not that there wasn't some relief in this mess. In any event, the CD-buying public can hear what Barenboim did with Book I in the studio, on Warner Classics. The studio can cover a multitude of sins, but not all of them.

Ian Bostridge, the British tenor, is another musician who has been in Carnegie Hall lately, singing Schubert's *Winterreise* (with Andsnes, as it happens). It's unusual to hear this great, bleak song-cycle from a light lyric tenor, but plenty of people like it from Bostridge, even if I find it a little too polished and pretty. Listeners may judge for themselves on the Bostridge/Andsnes recording, from EMI. This same label gives us Bostridge in French songs, by Debussy, Fauré, and Poulenc. I may object that the singing is a bit mannered and self-conscious, but it is certainly legitimate and considered—and Bostridge fans, who are legion, will go wild for it.

The bountiful American mezzo **Stephanie Blythe** is heard in important literature: the Brahms *Alto Rhapsody*, Wagner's *Wesendonck Lieder*, and Mahler's "Abschied," from *Das Lied von der Erde* (Virgin). She is a very fine singer, and she does nothing strictly wrong, but I might ask for more transport in this music—all of it.

Truly delicious, however, is the disc from **Natalie Dessay**, the French soprano, all Strauss—excerpts from *Ariadne auf Naxos*, *Arabella*, and *Der Rosenkavalier*, plus the *Brentano Lieder* (also on Virgin). Few can touch her in this corner of the Strauss rep: that reserved for high, light, coloratura sopranos such as Dessay.

Ready for the oddball? A CD from RCA Red Seal called ***Ravel's Greatest Hit***. It features ten different versions of *Bolero*. We hear two "straight" renditions—from conductors Charles Munch and Eduardo Mata—plus Isao Tomita on his synthesizer, Benny Goodman with his orchestra, Morton Gould, in a piano arrangement. More than a party album—hang on, does anyone attend such parties anymore? Let's start again: More than a novelty album, this CD is a tribute to an ingenious and enduring work. Ravel—an often grave man—would have smiled. **NR**

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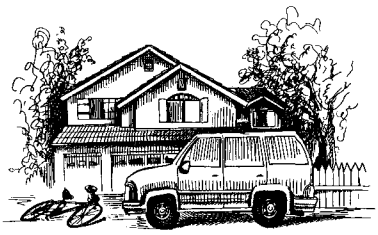
■ THE STRAGGLER ■

Fall Festival



JOHN DERBYSHIRE

Off to the Fall Festival on an October weekend, each of us with a different motive:

Dad—To escape from the election campaign for an afternoon.

Mom—To buy pickles.

Nellie (11)—In the hope of meeting friends, so they can shriek "Omigod!" at one another while jumping up and down and flapping their arms.

Danny (9)— To ride the rides.

To deal with the pickles first: There is a store a couple of townships away that makes superb pickled cucumbers. We never actually go to the store, I don't know why; but each year they have a booth at our own township's Fall Festival, and we go there to load up on garlic pickle, dill pickle, cajun pickle, and horseradish pickle. We are a pickle family. I was raised in the old English tradition of a huge joint of roast meat for Sunday lunch followed naturally by cold meat remains garnished with cheese and pickles for supper, and again on Monday—"Resurrection Day," as my mother rather irreverently called it. My wife spent her childhood in the Chinese province of Szechwan and doesn't consider that food has any flavor at all unless it blisters the roof of your mouth.

Pickles purchased and safely stashed in the car, we head for the rides. This isn't Great Adventure, of course, just a traveling carnival with a dozen or so large pieces of equipment and some side booths. The crowds are tremendous, though. Half the township seems to be present. There are long lines for all the rides, even the ones Danny, our rides authority, pronounces "lame." Mom, however, has a bold technique of waiting in line for one attraction while the kids ride another, then pulling them into her line just as the custodian is opening the gate. This works only if you are female and petite; when I try it, a fistfight very nearly breaks out. Thus declared redundant for place-holding chores, and with a vestibular system that will not tolerate anything that rotates at high speed, I have nothing much to do.

Standing around idly, watching these throngs of ordinary Americans—non-elite, non-metropolitan, suburban and country folk (I live in the outer-outer fringes of the New York suburbs; there's a farm down the road)—I am struck by the great variety of physical types I see. I'm not talking about "diversity." There isn't actually much of that. Not many black Americans seem to go to Fall Festival, though I have no clue why this should be so. Nor do any but the teeniest proportion of the festival-goers look Hispanic (which I take to mean Amerindian or mestizo), though there is a large Hispanic population center a couple of miles away. There are plenty of East Asians, though—another data point to add to my developing theory that East Asians are the most easily assimilable of all immigrant groups.

But no, I don't mean that kind of "diversity," I mean *physical types*: short, tall, straight, bent, pale, florid, blond, brunette, ecto-, meso-, and endomorphic, smooth and hairy, confident-looking and querulous, orthodontized and snaggle-toothed, erect and round-shouldered, oh-boy! lovely and oh-Lord! ugly, knobby Breughel peasant faces and soft, pampered beauty-parlor ones, silver-haired Sicilian grandees, Irish both red and black, long-jawed Levantines and moon-faced Balts, strutting young bucks with pumped-up muscles and frail mottled old ladies who kissed the boys coming home in '45. What a parade of humanity! There is something about seeing people en masse like this in all their weird and wonderful variety that fills me with tender regard for my species. (That remark should not, of course, be taken as signifying any intention to disparage or denigrate other species.) Homo sap are not such a bad lot.

That needs some qualification. You go to a carnival, you're going to see carny people. Where do they *come* from? Is there some ranch out in the Mojave desert where they breed these surly, slack-eyed, pony-tailed, tattooed, nicotine-stained wretches? (I'm gambling here that there are no carny people among the readership of NATIONAL REVIEW.) Where is Gordon MacRae? But milling around with my fellow citizens like this in a spirit of aimless work-evasion has put me in a good humor, and I can even smile at the carny people—especially with four half-gallon tubs of spicy pickles waiting in the car.

Other mysteries bob around in my idling brain. Looking at the rides, I wonder how on earth such contraptions survive in our lawyered-up society. Every so often one reads in the newspapers about someone's being scalped, crushed, dismembered, or eviscerated by an amusement-park ride. This is not surprising when you see the ancient, rusty devices shaking and juddering through their terrifying motions. I suppose they carry huge insurance premiums. That would certainly account for the startling ticket prices.

As cheesy as these holiday carnivals are, as little as there is to be said for them on a cultural level, they appeal to a conservative temperament. They are, in fact, conservative affairs, unchanged in most respects across the half-century I have been attending them, points of stillness in a changing world. I first fired a rifle—well, an air gun—at a fairground booth. I took my first girlfriend to a fair, and won her a huge stuffed-animal toy by an impressive display of marksmanship. (Should have claimed it back at the breakup.)

And back beyond the personal stretches the historical, for something of this kind has been going on for centuries—millennia, very likely. I imagine housewives were buying pickles at the fair, girls going to meet their coevals, boys to experience something thrilling, and dads to escape their work, back when 'Omer smote 'is bloomin' lyre. Michael Henchard, later the Mayor of Casterbridge, sold his wife at a fair not unlike this one: "among the peep-shows, toy-stands, waxworks, inspired monsters, disinterested medical men who travelled for the public good, thimble-riggers, nick-nack vendors, and readers of Fate." I don't imagine a wife sale would go over very well in 2004 America . . . but at least I have got away from the election campaign for an afternoon. **NR**

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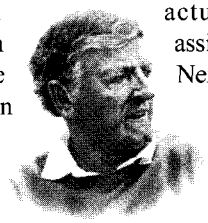
WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR.

Wargaming Iran

NEW YORK, NOVEMBER 9

If you can do it, forget Fallujah for just a minute. Think Iran. A productive way to do this is to read James Fallows in the current issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*. The title of the article is, "Will Iran Be Next?" The subtitle gives away the conclusions, and so will here be suppressed.

Not so the structure of Mr. Fallows's ingenious exploration of the challenge. We all know that "war games" are conducted at many levels. At the most rudimentary level, you and your companion can have agreed to basic rules: You will agree to act as Peerless Leader Kim Jong Il, your partner as president of the United States. Peerless Leader moves aggressively, you counter the move; the colloquy proceeds, and in the end—something happens, as in chess.



Imagine a war game in which there are seven actors, each one of them hugely experienced in government, whether as sometime head of the CIA, national security adviser, secretary of defense—and so on.

The meeting among these gentlemen has the objective of formulating a recommendation to the president on how to cope with the advances in Iran toward aggressive nuclear armament.

The question was asked: "Should Iran be likened to Saddam Hussein's Iraq, in whose possession nuclear weapons would pose an unacceptable threat, or to Pakistan, India, or even North Korea, whose nuclear ambitions the United States regrets but has decided to live with for now?" The immediate answer: The U.S. cannot "tolerate Iran's emergence as a nuclear power."

Here is another postulate in the war game. "At some point, relatively soon, Iran will have an arsenal that no outsiders can destroy, and America will not know in advance when that point has arrived."

Think back to Israel in 1981, when Begin sent planes to destroy the nuclear reactor Saddam was building at Osirak. That set back Saddam's nuclear program indefinitely. Why couldn't Israel do the same thing against Iran?

In the current scenario, Israel doesn't know where the nuclear laboratories are, any more than we do. Add to that, the problem of Israel's military in getting to those we reasonably suspect as warranting destruction. "Israeli planes would have to fly over Saudi Arabia and Jordan, probably a casus belli in itself given current political conditions; or over Turkey, also a problem; or over American-controlled Iraq," which would require U.S. approval of the mission. Add this: There isn't any way Israeli air demolitionists could get back from their mission. The targets are too far away.

So, the war-gamers conclude, a strike would need to be undertaken by the U.S. Here three stages are envisioned. The first, a bombing mission targeting Revolutionary Guard concentrations. That, actually, is easy to do, a 24-hour assignment using existing resources. Next in gravity would be the destruction of known and likely nuclear sites. To do this comprehensively would mean targeting 350 points, and to execute such an operation would take days.

To move on to Stage 3, a regime change, we would have to use U.S. ground troops. And to do either the second or the third stage, you would need air bases far beyond anything now available. "Compared with Iraq, Iran has three times the population, four times the land area, and five times the problems," one gamesman pointed out.

Pause and think retrogressively. "About Iran's intentions there is no disagreement. Iran is trying to develop nuclear weapons, and unless its policy is changed by the incentives it is offered or the warnings it receives, it will succeed."

Moreover, if we undertook preliminary military moves, the construction of air fields, the aggregation of troops and aircraft, what makes us certain that the Iranians would sit still for it?

Resolved: 1) Israel can't handle the challenge. 2) The U.S. can't abjure military action—there must be the threat that we will act. 3) Gaining time does not necessarily enhance our leverage.

So? What happens is going to depend on a quick judgment by the president of the United States. What we can learn from Iraq is that he needs to be counseled on the consequences of alternative actions. He needs to avoid such as what we are contending with in Iraq.

Your Rights, Their Rights

NEW YORK, NOVEMBER 12

We hear the clamor in the matter of the Patriot Act and other measures associated with retiring attorney general John Ashcroft. Just rubbing a hand lightly over U.S. history reminds us that these questions arose in the past, notoriously with the Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798. Abraham Lincoln liked to have his own way when pressures were rife, and of course he suspended habeas corpus, to the dismay of members of his own cabinet. Somebody should do something about that situation? Well, somebody is doing something, not surprisingly, under the auspices of Harvard University.

They have going there something called the Harvard Long-Term Legal Strategy Project. Its co-directors are the scholars Philip Heymann snd Juliette Kayyem.

A few people have been sent drafts of the project's tentative findings with, however, a warning that direct quotations are as yet forbidden—a warning so direly repeated on each of eleven pages that one wonders if a bolt of lightning would come down on any transgressor.

But without direct quotation from the project's summaries, we can usefully study the divisions in the questions being posed. The thinking is done logically. Under "Coercive Interrogation," for instance, one sees: "National security viewpoint"—which is elaborated, but in the forbidden language. There follows: "Democratic freedoms viewpoint—which the imaginative reader can easily supply—and then "Recommendations."

We move on to questions of Deten-

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tions; Military Commissions; Targeted Killing; Communications of U.S. Persons or Others within the United States Intercepted During the Targeting of Foreign Persons Abroad; Information Collection; Identification of Individuals and Collection of Information for Federal Files; Surveillance of Religious and Political Meetings; Distinctions Based on Group Membership (Profiling); and Oversight of Extraordinary Measures.

I take a single liberty and give the text of Information Collection—"National security viewpoint." We read, "There is no constitutional right to privacy of information that an individual has freely furnished to such parties as credit card, electronic communications or car rental companies. That information can provide a trail of activities that, if identified, would reveal a likely terrorist plan. For example, the following pattern discoverable from such records would be highly suspicious: a recent arrival from Yemen accompanied by prompt rental of a crop duster airplane and purchase of equipment or material that would not be useful for crops but would be useful to spread anthrax. We should not forgo this opportunity to 'connect the dots' in time."

Yeah. Let's not let that one get away.

Two points, in the welter of discussion about individual rights and corporate obligations are worth stressing.

There is wide resistance, in the libertarian fold (in which I count myself), to expediting individual identification by means other than those we already have. There are those who find this inexplicable. We are a nation of people who acquiesce in passport numbers (I was playfully given, years ago, #1234567). You can't easily mount a case against them without renouncing the very idea of passports.

And then there is the grand question that stands athwart such efforts as Harvard's to codify the separation of powers between the collectivity and the individual. It is: Everything ultimately depends on judgment. There can be (and there should be) rules against targeting chiefs of state. But there are imaginable times when the failure to squeeze the trigger at just that moment—say, when Colonel Amin is signaling the bomber pilot with the nuclear bomb headed for Jerusalem—would have worse consequences. The moral artist tells you more than any committee of Harvard scholars, however distinguished. It is not true that rules are made to be broken. But it is true that breaking the rules can be lifesaving.

Whee Time!

NEW YORK, NOVEMBER 16

So it will be Condoleezza Rice. We must deny the temptation to ruffles and flourishes which, heaven knows, one might revel in for a good hour. A woman! An African-American! An academic! Who had a high post at a tough, competitive major university! And—mirabile dictu—a conservative!

Okay, slide by that and concentrate on the theoretical and historical challenges she faces. Some of these she had a role in creating; some, she just bumped into.

Begin with Iraq. Tony Blair was just in town, injecting great drafts of high-octane enthusiasm for the challenge of bringing democracy to the Arab states. In passing, we need to acknowledge Blair as a high presence on the historical scene. The stand he has taken is not popular with his own political party, but he reckons to run on his association with President Bush's crusade, and to win reelection next spring. It has to be dismaying when a major European figure makes plans which can succeed or fail according as two or three thousand insurgents do or don't succeed in aborting the democratic enterprise in Iraq. But he is surely doing the right thing.

Condoleezza Rice isn't going to win or lose in the next six months. Mr. Bush has not brought in a specialist whose credentials get validated or found spurious in 90 days. He has personal knowledge of how she winds in and out of critical decisions, and he trusts her judgment and seeks her advice.

She identifies with the optimism of Tony Blair on the general thesis that the West should encourage the growth of democracy in the Arab states. The general feeling is that we are headed in the right direction and that huge lessons have been learned from the experience of Afghanistan, where women, of all people, wound their way to the polls and registered their vote. The distance between the high-water mark of the Taliban and the democratic exercise in Afghanistan is little more than three years—a fleck of time in the sweep of history. But Blair, Bush, and Rice see it as a fleck in the sky which becomes a galaxy.

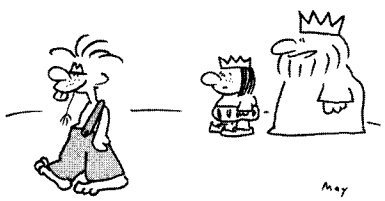
Political movements at a number of levels are in high motion. Arafat is dead. Can that mortality be celebrated by a renunciation of terrorism? Can a Bush-Rice team galvanize the strength of purpose needed to persuade the Palestinian populace to abandon their claim to the reconquest of Israel and generate a resilient state whose leaders are more convincingly elected by democratic means than by Yasser Arafat?

The tremors of change and challenge are felt at many levels. The CIA is undergoing major convulsions as old hands deny the acceptability of new concepts of purpose and management. Several senior officers are resigning, and apart from the loss of their services to their country, we need to celebrate that option: the glorious option of resigning. Nobody resigned from service to Stalin or Hitler. There is simultaneously the tradition of staying in to stand by the leader. Colin Powell did that, and leaves now after a reasonable period of identifying with a leader *qua* leader: which is different from the leader whose policies he always endorsed.

At a third level we have the phenomenon of U.S. soldiers who are being reprimanded and fined, and, the news tells us, here and there to face court martial—for failure to carry out orders in military circumstances. Such are the seeds of revolt. This is not going to happen to the American enterprise. The U.S. is too experienced and too proud to move towards anarchy, which always produces the autocrat or the despot.

So great ventures, democratic in composition, are struggling for historical affirmation. They are animated, ultimately, by the transcendent human ambition, which is to live as free as possible in a world in which so many claims are made on us.

—UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE



"That's your third cousin Lemuel—he's a Kentucky Bourbon."

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happy warrior

MARK STEYN

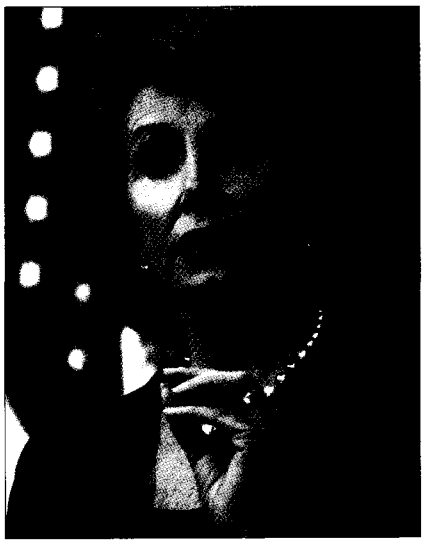
They're So Blue

I've greatly enjoyed the post-election traumas of the Democratic party. I loved those few days when Nancy Pelosi was ostentatiously dropping a soundbite from "Matthew" into every media appearance. Who is this Matthew guy she's on such chummy terms with? Matthew Meadows, Florida state representative for District 94? Matthew P. Denn, the Democratic candidate in the race for Delaware insurance commissioner?

No, turns out it's Matthew as in the Gospel according to. Big name in Jesusland, to use the new designation. A little too big, indeed, to be cited plausibly as evidence of one's acquaintance with Scripture. Anyone can refer in a vague way to Matthew. Had Mrs. Pelosi managed to rattle off a couple of verses from Philemon or Habakkuk, all over the vast Bush-voting swamp, millions of stump-toothed rednecks would have briefly stopped speaking in tongues as their jaws hit the floor. By the way, it's only two k's in the middle of "Habakkuk"—not like Amerikkka or John Ashkkkroft.

Anyway, after a week of trying to turn the Democratic whine into holy water, the House minority leader decided to chuck the saint-dropping. As the whole Jesusland thing suggests, her base isn't entirely on board with the outreach. And frankly the Democrats never do well when they try to square contemporary liberal pieties with religion. For one thing, they recoil from the very word "religion." Al Gore prefers to say, "Well, in my faith tradition . . ." As a rule, folks with a faith tradition tend not to call it such. At Friday prayers in Mecca, the A-list imams don't say, "Well, in my faith tradition we believe in killing all the infidels."

Second, prominent Democrats seem to have great difficulty getting even the well-known bits right. Christmas, according to Hillary Rodham Clinton in 1999, is when those in that particular faith tradition celebrate "the birth of a homeless child." Or, as Al Gore put it in 1997, "Two thousand years ago, a homeless woman gave birth to a homeless child." For Pete's sake, they weren't homeless—they couldn't get a hotel room. They had to sleep in the stable only because Dad had to schlep halfway across the country to pay his taxes in the town of his birth, which sounds like the kind of cockamamie bureaucratic nightmare only a blue state could cook up. Except that in Massachusetts, it's no doubt illegal to rent out your stable without applying for a Livestock Shelter Change of Use Permit plus a Temporary Maternity Ward for Non-Insured Transients License, so Mary would have been giving birth under a bridge on I-95.



MICHAEL KLEINFELD/UPI

Had a Matthew principle

Since everyone's tossing in post-election generalizations, here's mine. One of the features of the geopolitical landscape revealed by 9/11 was the widening gulf between Americans and Europeans. Some of us (ahem) noted that fact in the columns we wrote that very day. Nonetheless, the Democrats spent the next three years getting more European. That was hardly likely to improve their electoral prospects, though it got them great press across the Atlantic, and continues to do so. The *Guardian*'s Timothy Garton Ash, returning from a tour of the blue states, says Europeans need to modify the famous expression of solidarity of September 12, 2001: "Nous sommes tous américains." "Hands need to be joined across the sea in an old cause: the defence of the Enlightenment," writes Garton Ash. "We are all blue Americans now." That at least has the merit, unlike the phony-baloney *Le Monde* headline, of being sincere.

But I doubt whether it's terribly helpful to Democrats. American exceptionalism is better understood as the exceptionalism of Americans—the refusal of a (thin but decisive) majority of the citizenry to submit to the definition of "advanced Western democracy" as it's understood by Germans, Belgians, and Scandinavians. By contrast, the Democratic party for the most part believes wholeheartedly, as the Europeans do, in the great secular religion—the state as church. That's why when Al and Hill start talking about their faith tradition it somehow veers off into a lesson on the need for social programs. It's also why Democrats remain wedded to issues that have no resonance even in blue states. The Dems are the party of gun control not because Vermonters or Minnesotans are clamoring for it but because it's part of the transnational conventional wisdom.

I doubt very much whether a European–blue state alliance is the horse you'd bet on to save the Enlightenment. The EU, with its over-regulated economy, unaffordable social-welfare liabilities, and shriveled post-Christian birth rates, is a glimpse into a Democratic future. If you're chit-chatting with blue-staters in your average Ivy League college town, they express disbelief at this prognosis: Why, everything seems so much better ordered and agreeable over there. The electoral prominence of Jean-Marie Le Pen; the murder of Theo van Gogh; the banning of Belgium's major opposition party, the Vlaams Blok—oh, but these are freakish disconnected events, of no wider significance.

I think not. Over the next few years the news from Europe will get worse. We're about to witness the messy implosion of the secular West's last surviving faith, the state church. And, when that happens, what will the Democrats have left? **NR**

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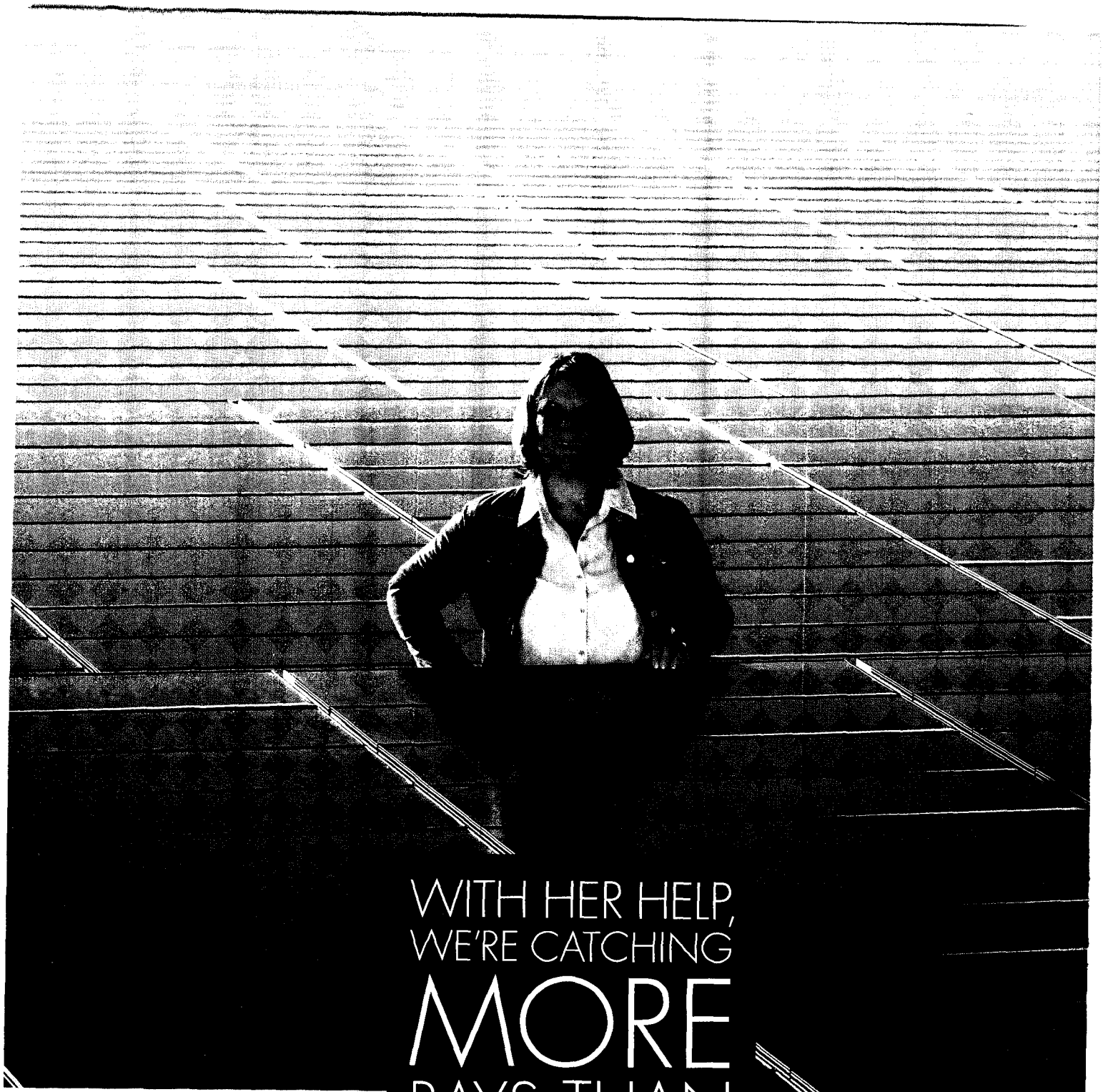

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